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THE SECOND MRS. TILLOTSON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NEVER FORGOTTEN."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER X. PROPOSAL.

"WELL, you've pulled through, Heaven be praised," said Captain Diamond, sitting with Tillotson one afternoon. "It was a narrow escape, believe me. But now, Tillotson, see. I want to speak to you seriously. Tom's going to put on his wise nightcap. I dare say you are laughing at me—"

"I wish I had half your sense, my dear friend," said the other, warmly, "as I wish that I had even a quarter of your kind heart."

"My poor fellow," said the captain, nervously passing by this compliment, "you went through a great deal—indeed you did, Tillotson; and now you won't mind my speaking to you seriously, will you?"

"My dear friend," said Mr. Tillotson, "surely—"

"Very well, then. Sir Duncan, you know, the doctor—who is about as wide-awake a fellow as ever stepped—he says it *can't* go on. It will be all back again to-morrow or next day. And if you are caught by the leg the next time, my dear fellow—I tell you this plainly—not all the doctors in town will pull you through."

"I have been very foolish," said Mr. Tillotson, "and mean to take more care of myself. After all, I begin to think it a selfish thing to be mooning away life in this way. I am going to begin. Indeed yes."

"Give me the hand," said Captain Diamond, eagerly. "I like to hear you say that. You're a good fellow." And he paused in some embarrassment. "Now, another thing. This isn't the place for you. Capital rooms, you know, but—"

"Well, I *am* thinking of changing," said Mr. Tillotson, smiling.

"It's not *that* so much," said the captain, in growing embarrassment. "It's the life. You ought to look about you, Tillotson. Why, you are only a boy, you know. Bless me! if I were your age, I'd go and pick out the prettiest girl and set up at once. I'd have done it years ago, only, my dear fellow," added the cap-

tain, with a comic look, "they didn't like the cut of my Roman nose, you see."

Mr. Tillotson shook his head. "That sort of thing is all past for me, long, long ago. I fear the same objection would apply—not, indeed, to the nose, for I have a very small one, but to my life and disposition."

"My dear friend," said the captain, enthusiastically, "is that all? Then I know a little girl that at this moment is worshipping the very key of your watch; that you have only to speak, for her to say 'Yes' with a heart and a half. You know who I mean, Tillotson; a little girl that's a treasure, and who, at this moment, knows no more of what I am talking about than a child unborn. Surely I am next door to an old woman, Tillotson. You know it was all head or tails with your life then. Upon my soul, it quite touched me to see her little affection—the creature! I thought her heart would be broken, I did indeed: but never a word. I picked it out, you know; and, as I stand here, and am a living Christian holding the king's commission, you owe your life to her—you do indeed! But for that faithful little soul, Tillotson, you'd be lying now nailed down fast in your coffin—Heaven be between you and harm, though!"

Wondering, amazed, Mr. Tillotson listened to the story, which the captain then told him, of her little exploit—related with many a "not a word of lie in what I am telling you, Tillotson. But I could talk to you for hours on this. And, you know, she's so delicate. A chest—really—now—on my solemn word of honour—no more than that bit of blotting-paper. Dennison, the Queen's own fellow—tip-top, you know, and attending all the great lords—has taken to her like his own child. See, Tillotson," added the captain, wistfully, just as another man would come to the bank, begging to get his bill "done," "try—just try and think of all this."

In this way the captain had carried out his little plan, although he had professed so humbly that Tom was "no better than an old woman"—with him a formal or contemptuous phrase—for his private opinion of that amiable and most sensible class of God's creatures who have travelled nearly to the end of the highway, and have brought with them a growing load of patience, good humour, and observation, was not nearly so low as that vulgar one of the world. He came home in great

spirits, and left his friend in deep thought, who did not so much recoil from it as he would have done before, but looked at it calmly, and even weighed it. In the weighing, too, the news that had reached him of the coming marriage did its part. "Why should I," he said to himself, bitterly, "go on and be guilty of the folly of making myself an eternal monument of Self-sacrifice, when it is not in fashion anywhere else? It is making myself absurd, and will only amuse others. It is time that I should begin to live." Then he thought with pleasure of the picture, mechanically but skillfully coloured by the captain's fingers. And he felt a sympathy and kindness to the girl who had been so true and "natural" in her devotion. "After all, the world has some people who care for me," he thought. Then he went back to that coming marriage. "God help her!" he said. "But she is sensible, and knows her own course." This reasoning and train of thought was spread over many days. He thought he must take the first opportunity of thanking his preserver.

The first opportunity was two days later. They were in their modest room, working, as the pale, ill-looking figure entered. The girl, whom rest had a little restored after her labours, felt herself glowing with almost a "lake" colour as this visitor entered. Mr. Tillotson had come back to his old easy and almost indifferent manner. "This is the first visit I have paid," he said, "and it certainly *should* be the first. What its poor value may be——"

"We are so glad to see you restored," the elder one said. The younger was still glowing and flaming. "Uncle, and we all, were so anxious."

"I meet nothing but goodness," said Mr. Tillotson, earnestly and sincerely, "and I am sure I don't know why. I have led a cold unproductive life; useful to no one, interesting to no one, profitable to no one, and therefore why any one should care whether I lived or died, is a mystery to me."

They said nothing. A milliner or work-woman came at this moment, and the elder girl, who represented industry in the house, got up to meet her. The younger half got up in a sort of alarm, but sat down again quickly.

"I am not deserving of this sympathy," he said to her. "I have heard the whole story of your kindness, and I have hastened to acknowledge it. I have been thinking over it these two days, and it has affected me more than I know how to express. I have long lost *that* art, and, I suppose, must be content to appear ungracious. But I *am* grateful, and I hope to be able to learn to show it."

The young girl lifted her soft eyes and burning cheeks towards his face. "It was nothing," she said, eagerly; "you say far too much of it; and—and I was so glad to have done it—oh, and so glad that you are well!" Then she became ashamed of this burst, and the confusion, from this opposition of shame and enthusiasm, had a very pretty effect.

"If I had some way of showing how I feel,

and what I feel to *you*," he went on, "and to Captain Diamond," he added, hastily—"I should be quite glad, if I could only discover some way."

With much hesitation, first being about to speak, then checking herself, she at last said, hurriedly, "If you would only make me—that is, us—a little promise—one little promise—as a sort of votive offering on your being restored to health."

"I shall, indeed," he said, smiling, "whatever it may turn out to be."

"It is," she went on, "to—to take a *little* more interest in life, to enjoy the world a little—and believe this, that there are those who like, and who are willing to like and esteem you—in short, to try and be a *little* happy. Oh, if you would do this—and if you were to try you would succeed—you would make uncle and us all so glad!"

She was colouring again, and confused at the boldness of this speech. Hermit, Trappist, almost Stylites at his heart, as Mr. Tillotson had tried to be, it was impossible not to be a little warmed at this natural ardour and candour. He spoke to her more warmly than he had done to any one for years. "I promise you," he said; "and I *shall* try."

Uncle Diamond came in at this point. He noticed her glowing face of pleasure, and a sort of gladness also in Mr. Tillotson's eyes. He was delighted himself. "This is something," he said, limping over for a chair. "Oh, this is grand! We shall soon have you on your legs altogether, Tillotson. Now, I tell you what; you'll stop and take your bit of dinner with us, won't you?"

"No, no," said the other; "not to-day."

"Never fear, we shall take care of you. Do, now; just to oblige us—just to celebrate the recovery!"

"Another day," said Mr. Tillotson, rising hastily.

The girl now spoke. "I thought you had made us a sort of promise about the world? And this is the way you will begin!"

A faint shade of impatience came over Mr. Tillotson's face. "It does not suit me," he said. "I cannot as yet, you know. I know it seems ungracious, but——"

He saw a wounded expression on her face, and that she was biting her red lips in what seemed vexation. In a moment he had thought of the precious service she had rendered him, her little chivalrous act, and felt that he *was* ungracious and ungrateful. He sat down again. "I think I must stay."

Joy came suddenly into both faces, like a fire that has been stirred. "Give me the hand," said uncle Diamond. "You are a good fellow, and we'll make a day of it, and a night of it too." This brave, gentle captain had, all his life long, been "making days of it" for other people, and delighted in nothing so much.

On this day he was in surprising spirits. He went out himself to cater. He chose "a fine fish," a thing for which he had a great

admiration, and which he had an old campaigner's skill in choosing. "The captain's haddock" was often seen on the sloping marble table at the fishmonger's, carefully put aside; for, though his orders were of a slender and unfrequent sort, this dear gentleman met with universal respect and attention as he went marketing, and his shilling haddock brought him more deference than the costly turbot did to the marquis's housekeeper. He came home in triumph.

After dinner, when the ladies were gone, the captain came back to his favourite subject. "Poor little girl! she has a great spirit. And oh, Tillotson, if you knew what she has been to me! And such sense! See even in that getting you to promise! Why, I should have been a year before I thought of such a thing. Now look here, Tillotson. What you ought to do is this. I am an old fogie that ought to be in one of the hospitals, and don't know how to say things in a nice roundabout way; I never got much education at the colleges (I only wish I had); but there were ten of us, and I was thought well off with a commission. But if I was in your place, and so young, I tell you what I would do. It would be the making of you."

And the captain, whose voice was trembling a little from excitement, hoisted himself up in his chair, to set his stiff leg at ease.

"Marry, Tillotson!" he went on. "I declare I am in earnest, and speaking for your interest. I am a fogie, I know, but I mean for your good. It would make a man of you. You just want that something with warmth and life to be near you, Tillotson, and that you may like and live for, and give your honest affection to, Tillotson. Look at me, what I am come to. Our fellows used to laugh at every fellow that met a nice good girl and married her; and we thought ourselves very wise. And even when Colonel—now Sir Thomas—Cameron came back to the regiment with a Scotch girl, I thought he had done a foolish thing. But he was on the right side of the hedge. Look at Sir Thomas Cameron now, with his fine family, like a prince, and look at Tom Diamond. I mean, until the last month or so."

It was long since the captain had made such a speech. There was a surprising weight in it, both of matter and of eloquence. It had its effect on Mr. Tillotson, who said nothing for a few moments.

"Thank you," he said—"thank you heartily. It is kind and good advice. But where would I look? Who would suit such a cold, soulless being as myself? Why should I ask any one to sacrifice herself?"

"Who?" said the captain, warmly. "Plenty. Look around; look about you. You are a man of business, and have sharp eyes enough. Plenty. Only try."

"Ah!" said Mr. Tillotson, sadly, "you don't know my life. Perhaps I might at this moment. I may have thoughts of trying, but feel that there would be no hope."

"But I tell you you are wrong," cried the captain, eagerly. "It only wants courage. Why, one would think, my dear fellow, that you were a kind of half monk, from the way you talk, instead of being a good-looking, agreeable fellow. Don't tell me. Why, there are lots of girls at this moment, and good and nice girls."

Very often afterwards the captain brought on this subject, and always with the same honest earnestness. He did, indeed, believe from his honest soul that this was the only panacea for the reformation of his friend. He almost wearied him.

CHAPTER XI. THE CAPTAIN'S SCHEMES.

BUT soon the good captain noticed a great alteration in his younger niece. Latterly Mr. Tillotson had become more and more absorbed in his banking, or at least said he was. And he scarcely came at all to the house. The captain at first was mystified, and then was dreadfully grieved.

"It is all my own stupid meddling," he said to himself, sorrowfully, "God forgive me! I am an old Botch. Why couldn't I let him alone? And that poor child!"

That poor child had, indeed, become first silent, then very fretful and solitary. The delicate appreciation of the captain saw the change almost at first, and he knew not what to do. He felt that his were clumsy fingers, that any handling would only irritate the wound. And so he often sat looking at her with wistful eyes, and trying in a hundred ways to soothe her. There was but one way, and he often took his stick and limped away to the bank, to try and bring his friend. Which usually ended in his coming away, saying sadly to himself, "I am an old Botch. Nothing but an old Botch."

The other girl, whose natural attitude seemed to be always that of one working for an eternity, he took into his confidence. "What is over her, dear?" he asked, anxiously. "Now, could you make out? She has told you?"

"No, uncle," she said, "she has not. But I know, and you know."

"And what are we to do?" said he. "I'd put my eyes upon sticks to bring it right. But I don't know how. Tom Diamond has found out at the end of his life that he's nothing but a Botch—more shame for him. I'd better leave it alone, and leave everything alone."

"Poor child," said she, sewing still, "nothing can be done for her in that case. She must cure herself, as her kindred have been forced to cure themselves before now."

"I don't understand it," said uncle Diamond, in deep grief. "I wish I did. If I say anything, it seems to me only to make her worse."

"Better leave her to herself, dear uncle," said the girl.

The captain sighed. That night he met an old brother-officer, one of the good-as-gold set,

who esteemed Tom Diamond. This gentleman insisted on giving him a dinner at the military club. And the captain, always gratified at this sort of attention, not for himself, but because it reflected honour on the steadiness and constancy of the service to old friends, came home to announce the news.

At the same time he made many humble apologies to his dear girls, but he hoped they would not mind his going, for Hodgson was a true old friend, &c.

The captain dined with his true old friend, and had a delightful evening. As he limped into the club, where none but gentlemen of the service were allowed to be entertained as guests, he was received by the waiters with all the honours of war. His lameness brought him many marks of distinction. He felt not a little proud of the grandeur and magnificence of the establishment; for, with that old delicacy, he had long ago withdrawn from all military associations, as having no title to them. He called himself, with modest disparagement, "Feather-bed soldier." It was a happy night with Hodgson, who had "gone on" and held by the service, and the two talked together over Colonel Cameron, and Trevelyan, and the duel, and the time that General Shortall came down for the inspection and found out that "Tom" had his sword fastened on with a bit of red tape, some one having stolen "Tom's" belt.

It was a charming night, and they talked over how "Tom" should join that club forthwith, and how he ought "by rights," in spite of all the stuff about feather-bed soldiers, to have been in it centuries ago. And he came home, limping slowly, as was his wont, and very much pleased. Next morning, at breakfast, he would tell his "girls," in his own dramatic way, of the whole scene, and of all that Hodgson had said and told. The captain had a key of his own, and let himself in, shutting the door to very softly, and taking off his shoes with infinite precautions for fear of disturbing the hard-worked woman who slept in a sort of sentry-box at the end of the passage. "How she lives there and has her health, the creature," the captain often said, compassionately, "the Lord only knows!" But, at the same time, he gave her many a half-crown to make up for this want of accommodation. He then stole up-stairs softly, went to the drawing-room where his light was left for him, and entered, still softly. The captain was shocked and ashamed to find that it was two o'clock. The light was burning, and there was some one sitting there, but who it was it was hard to say, for it was a girl with her head bent forward on the table, and pressed against a book. Some little noise from the handle of the door roused her.

"My goodness!" said the captain, starting back, as a worn, tearful, miserable face was lifted to him. "My dear, darling girl!" he went on, limping up to the table, "what is all this? What has happened?"

The heated face, which was almost marked with crimson streaks from weeping, looked at

him wildly a moment. Then she rose, ran over to put her arms about him, hide her face against his chest, and said, "Oh, uncle, uncle! I am very wretched."

The captain soothed her like a mother; she was sobbing hysterically.

"Now, now, *now*," he said, "don't; be a good child. All shall come right in time" (with wonderful instinct he knew what was wrong); "leave it to me—to old Tom. He'll set his old head at work; come, sit down there, pet. Tell me about it, and don't be afraid. I'm your friend against all the world."

"Oh, uncle," she went on, "what have I done to him, that he should treat me in this way? I never injured him. It is so cruel; all because I—I—"

"I know, dear," said the captain, still soothing; "because you like him. It isn't a crime. There's nothing to be ashamed of in it. There hasn't been a fine girl in the world that didn't like a man that was worthy of her, or didn't find one either. Never fear, dear. I'll set the business right; leave it to me."

"No, no," said she, still hiding her face; "not for the world."

"Yes, *for* the world, dear," said the captain; "at least, we'll talk of it in the morning. This is a dreadful hour to be sitting up to, wearing out those nice eyes writing so! Ah, I'd like to see that journal of yours! Though as to sitting up, I needn't speak; I ought to be ashamed of myself, and have more sense. But poor Hodgson was so kind. He stood to me long ago, and I cannot help it. Come now, dear, bed's the place; and if the old fogie's head of mine can think on anything, you may depend on Tom Diamond."

Next morning, when Mr. Tillotson was wearily struggling through papers—for the dealing with which he ought to have had a shovel and a cart—the captain came limping in, clean, bright, and whiskers curled with the old French irons, and glistening in the sunshine. The bishop's hat was in his hand. He sat down and talked to his friend for some time a little restlessly. In truth, he did not know how to begin.

"My dear Tillotson," he said, at last, "I was dining with old Charley Hodgson—a real good one of the old set—at the fine club they have got now, and after talking over our old stories till two o'clock, as old fellows always will, I came home. When I got to the drawing-room and thought to find every soul in bed—what do you think? There was a poor girl sitting up with her face down on the table, and I declare to you, Tillotson, before Heaven, with her eyes worn out of her head with sobbing and crying—I was near crying myself, like an old fogie as I am—and her face all drawn and flushed; the creature!"

The other started and cast down his eyes. He knew at once whom the captain alluded to.

"It's no use calling this or hiding that," said the captain, gloomily. "I am no good at that

sort of thing. I never could do it. It's only fair to tell you. The girl's pining away. She eats no more than a sparrow does. And I tell you, Tillotson, it goes to my heart to see it, and it would go to yours, too; and, before God, I don't know what to do."

Mr. Tillotson said, in some agitation, "What can I do? I feared this, and suspected it."

"Why should you fear it?" said the captain, gloomily. "She's as bright as a jewel—too good for any man; even for you. I shouldn't tell you this. I think, if she knew it, the creature would die. But you can't see her wasting and pining. I can't bear to think of her, as I saw her last night—I can't. And I know it's hard upon you, too."

"But what would you have me do?" said Mr. Tillotson, irresolutely. "No woman could think of me. I have lived long enough to find *that out*," he added, bitterly. "And, indeed, I could make no woman happy."

"You don't know," said the captain, warming and growing excited. "You could, I'll swear. You'll make *her* happy. She'll make a man of you—she'll worship the ground you walk on—be your slave, and that sort of thing. And see—see, Tillotson," added the captain, with what seemed very marked meaning, "you ought to: for *you'll save her life!* I tell you, *you will.*"

Mr. Tillotson's lip curled a little. "I know, and hope I never shall forget the obligation to which you allude. But—"

"Before Heaven, I never meant it," said the captain, starting up in an agony. "I did not, on my soul—only I don't know how to say things. My dear friend, you must forgive me. But when I think of this poor child last night, I lose my wits. Do try," he added, piteously, "and do something for her, and you won't regret it. Tom Diamond tells you so!"

Tom Diamond said no more then. He had worked himself into a heat, and seemed to be almost pleading for pardon for some act.

"I shouldn't have done this," he said, as he went away. "I know I shouldn't. If she knew it, I declare I believe she would drop down and die! But I don't want to see her miserable, and you miserable, Tillotson, all for want of a little speaking out. If I knew *how* to speak out and *come round* the point like some of the clever fellows, I'd do it. But I never was trained. You don't mind me, Tillotson—do you?" he added, wistfully. "Only a fogie, but a well-meaning fogie. And that poor thing at home. I mean it well for *her*, Tillotson."

"My dear friend," Mr. Tillotson said, taking his hand kindly, "I know you now by this time, and all your goodness, and what a deep interest you have taken in me—more than, indeed, I deserve. The world is only too good to me; and I suppose if I was but sensible enough to meet it half way—Perhaps I am, as you say, only shutting myself out from bright gardens, and flowers, and paradise, and happi-

ness. Perhaps I might succeed in getting rid of myself, or changing myself. And so I promise you now that I will think seriously of what you have said to me. But of course not a word to—"

"As I am a living man—no!" said the captain, fervently. "Indeed, no—not for the whole world! This is noble of you, Tillotson. And you send me away I can't tell you how happy." And the captain limped down-stairs joyfully. He went home, and was in great spirits for the rest of the day. During dinner, laughed and talked very cheerfully.

The girl, with her flushed cheeks, sat silently opposite. After dinner, when the elder had gone to fetch the eternal work, she stole over to him suddenly, and whispered, "Don't mind what I said last night, while my head was all confused. Promise me not to think—"

"I will," said the captain, readily. "Honour bright! There's my hand! Now!"

Thus the life went on. Gradually Tillotson got into the habit of going to the captain's. The sight of the faces there, the tone of that fireside, tranquillised him. He began to find that he had greater control over his mind, could find strength to close the great gates against the past, and keep the crowd of old images from rushing in tumultuously as they did at home in his lonely rooms. Not that he lost the image of the old cathedral casket, and what it held. Did he dare to open it and look in, the old perfume would have poured in and intoxicated him and brought back the old malady. Now he had a firmer grasp of himself, could look more coldly and even hopefully to the future. He hesitated a long time, undecided.

A little incident at last decided him. He used to have sent to him from the old cathedral town the weekly paper of the place, the *St. Alans Courant*, which seemed to revive for him its flavour and colouring. Latterly (part of his new programme), he had ordered it to be discontinued; but they still sent it. His eye glanced over it mechanically, but fell upon the word "Marriage." Then he read, in the usual florid language appropriate to such events, that it "was rumoured that a lovely and accomplished ward of one of the most influential gentlemen of our town would shortly *give her hand* to a young gentleman in the Company's service, also favourably known to the citizens of *St. Alans*. *Quod faustum*," added the local journal.

"Give her hand," repeated Mr. Tillotson. "There is the last act, chapter and verse, too. So be it: the age of self-sacrifice is over." He longed to begin his new life. He was to go to the captain's to dinner that evening. He thought a good deal at intervals during the day, and finally, when the hour was near, set off hastily. He found the captain and his younger niece waiting there. As usual, her face coloured suddenly as he entered. He presently made a sign to the captain, which that intelligent old officer understood at once, and who, with some

ostentation and scarcely dramatic excuse about "seeing to the haddock," limped away. Did the young girl, intelligent also, see this sign? But she made no protest.

"I have come," said Mr. Tillotson, going over to her hastily, "to say that I cannot stay this evening——" Her face fell. "But I have something to say to you, if you will allow me, and will hear me now."

She hung down her head, but could say nothing.

"I have been thinking," he went on, "over and over again, of your conduct on that night. It is only now I am beginning to see its full force. I must have been ungrateful, and——"

"No, no, no!" she said, softly; "indeed, no. You have thanked me more than enough already."

"Thanks are not what I am going to offer," he said. "I am going to ask you to let me lay myself under a still heavier obligation; strange thanks, you will say. But my life has hitherto been a raw blank day of coldness and misery. I have been living in a sort of delusion. I have thought that all men were cold, and heartless, and hateful; that women were, at the least, indifferent—and, forgive me—selfish; and that the world was all barrenness. Now I have found that there is some warmth. I have seen kindness and unselfishness, and believe that there is yet more to be discovered, if I look for it. Will you help me? I have little to offer. Not a warm heart, I fear; but certainly a grateful one. Not what is called love, but what may become love. I want to live. Will you help me?"

This was his proposition. She was very natural and romantic, as has been described; confusion, surprise, delight, went rushing to her cheeks. She could not speak for some moments, then said, perhaps in an unmaidenly way, "Oh, how good, how noble. I could sink down at your feet."

"I will do what I can," he went on; "and you will make a generous allowance. I am accustomed to the old hard and cold ways."

"Oh, it is not that," she said, starting back; "but this is all kindness and gratitude—what they call gratitude—ah! I am sure it is."

"No, no," he said; "I want to live again—to be human. And will you not help me?"

"With my whole life and soul," she said, fervently, and giving him her hand. Suddenly she added, "But you will go back. You will think of this again, and go back. To-morrow—in a week, or two weeks."

"Never," he said; "you don't know me yet, I see. Not if the world were to change."

"Would you give me," she said, timorously and hanging down her head, "your word—I don't say your honour. But, oh! it would be such a support."

"You shall have both," he said; "my word and my honour. I solemnly swear to carry out what I have proposed to you now."

He went away soon after, and met the captain on the stairs. The captain looked at him wistfully, and without speaking—too delicate

to put a question when there was such uncertainty. But Mr. Tillotson took his hand and half whispered, "It is done! I must try and be happy, for I have a great chance of happiness."

MISERY-MONGERS.

"Poor fellow," said A. to B., looking after C. with mingled regard and regret. "He will never be happy himself, nor make any other human being happy."

It was most true. Poor C. was a very worthy man: an honest, kindly, and well-intentioned man; well-to-do in business; in his domestic relations rather fortunate than otherwise; blessed with good health, good looks, and rather more than the average of brains. Altogether an enviable person—externally. Yet his friend, apparently much less lucky than himself, regarded him with the profoundest pity. "No, C. will never be happy. Nothing in this world would ever make him happy." And nothing ever did.

C. is no uncommon character. He was a misery-monger: one of those moral cuttle-fishes who carry about with them, and produce out of their own organism, the black liquid in which they swim. If they could only swim in it alone! Is it any good to show them their own likeness—these poor creatures, who, without any real woe, contrive to make themselves and everybody about them thoroughly miserable. Can we shake them out of their folly by a word of common sense? Probably not; your confirmed misery-monger is the most hopeless being in creation: but there are incipient stages of the complaint, which, taken in time, are curable. To such, it may not be unadvisable to present these incurables as a wholesome "shocking example."

Misery-mongers (the word is not to be found in Johnson, yet it suits) are those who do not really suffer affliction, but make a trade of it—and often a very thriving business too. They are scattered among every class, but especially they belong to the "genus irritabile"—the second or third-rate order of people who live by their brains. Not the first order—for the highest form of intellect is rarely miserable. True genius of the completest kind is not only a mental but a moral quality. Itself creates the atmosphere it lives in: a higher and rarer air than that of common earth.

Calm pleasures there abide;—majestic pains.

To a really great man, the petty vanities, shallow angers, and morbid crotchets of smaller natures are unknown. Above all, genius gives to its possessor a larger, clearer vision; eyes that look outwards, not inwards. That enormous Ego—the source of so many puny woes to lesser minds—rarely grows rampant in a man who is great enough to know his own littleness. Consequently, he is saved at once from a hundred vexations which dog the heels of a mental Chang—a seven-foot giant of genius—who is always measuring himself with Tom, Dick, and Harry, and requiring, or fancying he requires, larger

clothes, longer beds, and bigger hats than they. When Tom, Dick, and Harry, annoyed at these exactions, find that the small son of Anak is not so very much taller than themselves, cut him up in reviews or snub him in society, great is the vexation of spirit he endures. But your real giant, who never thinks of Tom, Dick, and Harry at all, takes the matter quite calmly: whatever be his own altitude, he sees before him an ideal far higher than himself, and ten times higher than anything they see, and this keeps him at once very humble in his own opinion, and very indifferent to theirs. The present essayist, though decidedly *not* a man of genius, has known a good many such, and has always found them neither strutting like peacocks nor marching on stilts, but moving about as mild and tame as the elephant in the Zoological Gardens, and as apparently unconscious of their own magnitude. It is your second-rate, your merely clever man, who, ape-like, is always rattling at the bars of his cage, mopping and mowing to attract attention, and eagerly holding out his paw for the nuts and apples of public appreciation, which, if he does not get—why, he sits and howls!

Such people have rarely suffered any dire calamity or heart-deep blow. To have sat down with sorrow—real sorrow—more often gives a steadiness and balance to the whole character, and leaves behind a permanent consistent cheerfulness, more touching, and oh! how infinitely more blessed, than the mirth of those who have never known grief. Also, after deep anguish comes a readiness to seize upon, make the best of, and enjoy to the uttermost, every passing pleasure: for the man who has once known famine will never waste even a crumb again. Rather will he look with compassionate wonder at the many who scatter recklessly their daily bread of comfort and peace; who turn disgusted from a simple breakfast because they are looking forwards to a possible sumptuous dinner; or throw away contemptuously their wholesome crust, because they see, with envious eyes, their opposite neighbour feeding on plum-cake.

No, the miserable people whom one meets are not the really unhappy ones, or rather those who have actual misfortune to bear, there being a wide distinction between misfortune and unhappiness. How often do we see moving in society, carrying everywhere a pleasant face, and troubling no one with their secret care, those whom we know are burdened with an inevitable incommunicable grief: an insane wife, a dissipated husband, tyrannical parents, or ungrateful children? Yet they say nothing about it, this skeleton in the cupboard, which their neighbours all know of or guess at, but upon which they themselves quietly turn the key, and go on their way; uncomplaining, and thankful to be spared complaining. What good will it do them to moan? It is not they, the unfortunate men, nor yet the men of genius, who contrive to make miserable their own lives and those of everybody connected with them. The true misery-mongers are a very different race; you

may find the key to their mystery in Milton's famous axiom,

Fall'n cherub, to be weak is miserable,
Doing or suffering.

There, for once, the devil spoke truth. Miserable people are invariably weak people.

O well for him whose will is strong,
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.

Of course not, because his firm will must in time shake off any suffering; and because no amount of externally inflicted evil is to be compared to the evil which a man inflicts upon himself; by feebleness of purpose, by cowardly non-resistance to oppression, and by a general uncertainty of aims or acts. He who sees the right and cannot follow it; who loves all things noble, yet dare not fight against things ignoble in himself or others; who is haunted by a high ideal of what he wishes to be, yet is for ever falling short of it, and tortured by the consciousness that he does fall short of it, and that his friends are judging him, not unjustly, by what he is rather than by what he vainly aims at being—this man is, necessarily, one of the unhappiest creatures living. One of the most harmful too, since you can be on your guard against the downright villain, but the æsthetic evil-doer, the theoretically good and practically bad man, who has lofty aspirations without performances, virtuous impulses and no persistence—against such an one you have no weapons to use. He disarms your resentment by exciting your pity; is for ever crying "Quarter, quarter!" and, though you feel that he deserves none, that his weakness has injured yourself and others as much as any wickedness, still, out of pure compassion, you sheathe your righteous sword and let him escape unpunished. Up he rises, fresh as ever, and pursues his course, always sinning and always repenting, yet claiming to be judged not by the sin but the penitence; continually and obstinately miserable, yet blind to the fact that half his misery is caused by himself alone.

And this brings us to the other root of misery-mongering—selfishness. None but a thoroughly selfish person can be always unhappy. Life is so equally balanced that there is always as much to rejoice as to weep over, if we are only able—and willing—to rejoice in and for and through others.

Time and the hour run through the roughest day—

if we will but let it be so—if we will allow our sky to clear and our wounds to heal—believing in the wonderfully reparative powers of Nature when she is given free play. But these poor souls will not give her free play; they prefer to indulge in their griefs, refusing obstinately all remedies, till they bring on a chronic dyspepsia of the soul, which is often combined with a corresponding disease of the body.

It may seem a dreadful doctrine to poetical people, but two-thirds of a man's woes usually begin—in his stomach. Irregular feeding, walk-

ing, and sleeping, with much too regular smoking, are the cause of half the melancholy poetry and cynical prose with which we are inundated. Also of many a miserable home, hiding its miseries under the decent decorum which society has the good taste and good feeling to abstain from prying too closely into; and of not a few open scandals, bankruptcies, and divorce cases. If a modern edition of the *Miseries of Human Life* were to be written, the author might well trace them to that unsanitary condition, first of body and then of mind, into which civilisation, or the luxurious extreme of it, has brought us, and upon which some of us rather pride ourselves, as if it were a grand thing to be "morbid;" quite forgetting the origin of the word, and that such a condition, whether mental or physical, or both combined, is, in truth, not life, but the beginning of death, to every human being.

And suppose it is so. Granted that I am a man with "nerves," or "liver," or any other permanent ailment, am I to make my ill-used and consequently ill-conducted interior a nuisance to all my family and friends? Did no man's head ever ache but mine? Is no one else blessed (or cursed) with a too sensitive organism, obliged to struggle with and control it, and at least contrive that it shall trouble others as little as possible? Why should my wife, sister, or daughter be expected to bestow unlimited sympathy upon every small suffering of mine, while she hides many an ache and pain which I never even know of, or, knowing, should scarcely heed, except so far as it affected my own personal comfort, or because it is a certain annoyance to me that anybody should require sympathy but myself? Have my friends no anxieties of their own that I should be for ever laying upon them the burden of mine—always exacting and requiting nothing? People like a fair balance—a cheery give and take in the usefulness as well as the pleasantness of life. Is it wonderful, then, that, after a time, they a little shrink from me, are shy of asking me to dinner?—at least, often. For they feel I may be a cloud upon the social board; my moods are so various, they never know how to take me. They are very sorry for me, very kind to me, but, in plain English, they would rather have my room than my company. I am too full of myself ever to be any pleasure or benefit to others.

For it is a curious fact that the most self-contained natures are always the least self-engrossed; and those to whom everybody applies for help, most seldom ask or require it. The centre sun of every family, round which the others instinctively revolve, is sure to be a planet bright and fixed, carrying its light within itself. But a man whose soul is all darkness, or who is at best a poor wandering star, eager to kindle his puny candle at somebody else's beams, can be a light and a blessing to nobody.

And he may be—probably without intending it—quite the opposite. Who does not, in visiting a household, soon discover the one who

contributes nothing to the happiness of the rest, who is a sort of eleemosynary pensioner on everybody's forbearance, living, as beggars do, by the continual exhibition of his sores, and often getting sympathy—as beggars get half-pence—just to be rid of him? Who does not recognise the person whose morning step upon the stair, so far from having "music in 't," sends a premonitory shiver, and even a dead silence, round the cheerful, chattering breakfast-table?—whose departure to business, or elsewhere, causes a sudden rise in the domestic barometer?—nay, whose very quitting a room gives a sense of relief as of a cloud lifted off? Yet he may have many good qualities, but they are all obscured and rendered useless by the incessant recurrence to and absorption in self, which is the root of all his useless woes. And, alas! while believing himself—as he wishes to be—the most important person in his circle, our miserable friend fills really the lowest place therein—that of the one whom nobody trusts, nobody leans upon; whom everybody has to help, but who is never expected to help anybody. How could he? for in him is lacking the very foundation of all helpfulness—the strong, brave, cheerful spirit which, under all circumstances, will throw itself out of itself sufficiently to understand and be of use to its neighbour.

Truly, as regards usefulness, one might as well attempt to labour in an unlighted coal mine as to do one's work in the world in an atmosphere of perpetual gloom. Nature herself scorns the idea. Some of her operations are carried on in tender temporary shadow—but only temporary. Nothing with her is permanently dark, except the corruption of the grave. Wherever, in any man's temperament, is incurable sadness, morbid melancholy, be sure there is something also corrupt; something which shrinks from the light because it needs to be hid; something diseased, in body or mind, which, so far from being petted and indulged and glossed over with poetical fancies, needs to be rooted out—with a hand, gentle, indeed, but strong and firm as that of the good surgeon, who deals deliberately present pain for future good.

A healthy temperament, though not insensible to sorrow, never revels in it or is subdued by it; it accepts it, endures it, and then looks round for the best mode of curing it. We cannot too strongly impress on the rising generation—who, like the young bears, have all their troubles before them—that suffering is not a normal but an abnormal state; and that to believe otherwise is to believe that this world is a mere chaos of torment made for the amusement of the omnipotent—not God, but devil—who rules it. Pain must exist—for some inscrutable end—inseparable from the present economy of the world; but we ought, out of common sense and common justice, and especially religion, to regard it not as the law of our lives, but as an accident, usually resulting from our breaking that law. We cannot wholly prevent suffering, but we can guard against it, in degree; and we never need wholly succumb to

it till we succumb to the universal defeat, preparatory to the immortal victory.

When one thinks of death—of how brief, at best, is our little day, and how quickly comes the end that levels all things, what folly seems the habit of misery?—for it grows into a mere habit, quite independent of causes. Why keep up this perpetual moan, and always about ourselves, because we are not rich enough, or handsome enough, or loved enough—because other people have better luck than we? Possibly they have;—and possibly not; for we all know our own private cares, but few of us know our neighbour's. And so we go on, always finding some pet grievance to nurse, and coaxing it from a trifling vexation into an incurable grief or an unpardonable wrong. Little matter what it is; to a man of this temperament any peg will do whereon to hang the gloomy pall, self-woven, of perpetual sorrow. Or else he spins it, spider-like, out of his own bowels, and when its filmy meshes grow into great bars between him and the sky, he thinks with his petty web he has blurred the whole creation.

Poor wretch! if he could only pull it down and sweep it away!—if he could accept his lot, even though a hard one, an afflicted stomach, sensitive nerves, a naturally bad temper, or an unnaturally empty purse. Still, my friend, grin and bear it! Be sure you do not suffer alone; many another is much worse off than you. Why not try to give him a helping hand, and strengthen yourself by the giving of it? For we do not wish to make a mock of you, you miserable misery-monger, since you are much to be pitied; and there is a sad reality at the bottom of your most contemptible shams. We would rather rouse you to forget yourself, and then, be sure, you will gradually forget your sufferings. And supposing these should remain in greater or less degree, as the necessary accompaniment of your individual lot or peculiar idiosyncrasy, still, according to the common-sense argument of the sage author of "Original Poems," remonstrating with an unwashed child,

If the water is cold, and the comb hurts your head,

What good will it do you to cry?

Alack! we are all exceedingly like naughty children; we do not enjoy being made clean.

And yet, some of us who have gone through a rather severe course of lavatory education, can understand the blessing of a sunshiny face—ay, even in the midst of inevitable sorrow. Some of us feel the peace that dwells ever at the core of a contented heart, which, though it has ceased to expect much happiness for itself, is ever ready to rejoice in the happiness of others. And many of us still show in daily life the quiet dignity of endurance; of not dwelling upon or exaggerating unavoidable misfortune; of putting small annoyances in one's pocket, instead of flourishing them abroad in other people's faces, like the jilted spinster who "rushed into novel-writing, and made her private wrong a public nuisance." How much wiser

is it to hide our wrongs, to smother our vexations, to bear our illnesses, whether of body or mind, as privately and silently as we can. Also, so far as it is possible, to bear them ourselves alone, thankful for sympathy, and help too, when it comes; but not going about beseeching for it, or angry when we do not get it, having strength enough to do without it, and rely solely on the Help divine.

For to that point it must always come. The man who is incurably and permanently miserable is not only an offence to his fellow-creatures, but a sinner against his God. He is perpetually saying to his Creator, "Why hast Thou made me thus? Why not have made me as I wanted to be, and have given me such and such things which I desired to have? I know they would have been good for me, and then I should have been happy. I am far wiser than Thou. Make me what I choose, and grant me what I require, or else I will be perpetually miserable."

And so he lives, holding up his melancholy face, poor fool! as an unceasing protest against the wisdom eternal—against the sunshiny sky, the pleasant earth, and the happy loving hearts that are always to be found somewhere therein. Overclouded at times, doubtless, yet never quite losing their happiness while there is something left them to love—ay, though it be but a dirty crying child in the streets, whom they can comfort with a smile or a halfpenny.

Such people may be unhappy—may have to suffer acutely for a time—but they will never become misery-mongers. There is a healthiness of nature which has the power of throwing off disease to the final hour of worn-out nature. Their souls, like their bodies, will last to the utmost limit of a green old age, giving and taking comfort, a blessedness to themselves and all about them. In their course of life many a storm may come; but it never finds them unprepared. They are sound good ships, well rigged, well ballasted; if affliction comes, they just "make all snug," as the sailors say, and so are able to ride through seas of sorrow into a harbour of peace—finally, into that last harbour, where may Heaven bring at last every mortal soul, even misery-mongers!

SPEECHLESS BONES.

WHEN the worthy tenant of Milcote manor was apprised of the circumstance that about three thousand skeletons were reposing within sixty paces of his house door, it probably did not occur to him that, on the first day after publication of the news, a similar number of skeletons encased in living flesh would wait upon him to luncheon. Such, however, was the case, and such the hospitality with which they were received, that, had this influx of archaeologists continued many days, good Mr. Adkins would have been as effectually eaten out of house and home, as if the warriors who had so long maintained this invisible leaguer round the mansion could have resumed

their flesh, and placed him in a condition of actual blockade.

Fortunately for his resources, no sooner was it understood that bones—nothing but bones—a continuous monotony of bones—was all that was discoverable, than the attendance dwindled to a score or so a day; then to a few scientific investigators; until, on the day on which the writer, in company with a friend, resident in Stratford-on-Avon, visited the spot, no one else was present to divide the attention of the good-natured and well-informed host. We were thus enabled to arrive at certain small facts connected with the scene of the discovery, as well as with the latter itself, which, pending the dispersion of the mystery still overhanging these remains, may not be wholly devoid of interest.

Milcote, so close upon the border of Warwick as to be included in a Gloucestershire parish, has found an able historian in the precise Sir John Dugdale, its fortunes tracing back more than twelve centuries, to the days of Ethelred, King of Mercia, by whom the manor was annexed to the bishopric of Worcester. How it was separated from that see “by violence,”—a term unexplained in history—in the time of Danish Canute—how, after the Norman invasion, it passed to Bishop Odo of Bayeux, then to Ralph Boteler, Geoffrey Mahtelle, “one Madiho,” and various other gentlemen, more or less known and respected in history, until it vested—a not uncommon vestment in old days—in the king, by escheat, are matters of little more than barren record. In the reign of John, it came into the possession of Geoffrey de Haulville, and from his family descended to the Grevilles, during whose tenure occurred a tragedy which has found record in other pages than Dugdale’s, and which drew the proud Grevilles of Milcote into a melancholy notoriety.

It was in the reign of Elizabeth, that Ludovick Greville succeeded to the large family estates, at the age of twenty-two. Ambitious, gay, unprincipled, he made waste of his revenues, and, having incurred great expense in the construction of a castle (long since crumbled into dust), found himself, despite his large possessions, plunged in considerable difficulty. Now, Ludovick was a man devoid of heart and feeling. His eldest son had been slain by the descent of an arrow upon his bare head, the shaft having been discharged without purpose into the air by his brother. Their brutal father laughed, as if it were a good jest, and told the unfortunate archer that it was the best shot he ever made in his life.

This estimable person appears to have cast envious eyes upon the comfortable unencumbered possessions of a former agent of the family, one Webb, described by Dugdale as a “wealthy batchelour,” then residing on his estate of Drayton, in Oxfordshire. This property Greville resolved to obtain, and, as a first step, prepared a document, purporting to be a will made by Webb, in which the latter devised the whole of his Drayton property to the forger,

Greville. This done, he invited the intended victim to join a Christmas party at his estate of Seasoncote, in Gloucestershire, and there, by the hands of two hired ruffians, strangled him in his bed.

A report was instantly circulated that the old man had fallen very ill. The minister of the parish was sent for to complete his will, and one of the assassins, secreted in the curtained bed with the corpse, answered in feeble tones to the questions by which Greville affected to ascertain the intentions of the supposed dying man. These were not many, since with the exception of an attorney of Banbury, whose mouth it was thought desirable to stop, Ludovick Greville’s was the only name mentioned in the will. A few hours later, it was announced that all was over, and order was taken for the victim’s burial.

Ludovick Greville was in the full enjoyment of his ill-gotten wealth, when one of his guilty instruments, being in his cups at a Stratford inn, let drop some noticeable words, signifying that it was in his power, if it should so please him, to hang his master. His accomplice, reporting this indiscretion to his master, and receiving orders to make the babbler “safe,” did so, and flung his body into a pit; a flood filling the latter, the corpse came up, was discovered, and led to the apprehension of the murderer, who confessed the whole affair. On the sixth of November, fifteen hundred and thirty-six, both culprits were tried in Westminster Hall, when Greville, to prevent the forfeiture of the large landed estates of the family, refused to plead, and was condemned, under the rigour of the existing law, to the *peine forte et dure*—pressing to death—a doom which he underwent on the eighth day ensuing.

Thus Milcote had already obtained its passing hour of notoriety, when the new circumstance arose which bids fair to impress it, with a deeper and more legitimate interest, on the historic page.

It would seem, from information chiefly derived from the lips of the proprietor, a fine specimen of the higher class of British yeomen, a man of reading and intelligence beyond the sphere of agricultural pursuits, that for these forty years human relics have been, at intervals, laid bare by the Milcote ploughmen; the occurrence being sufficiently common to afford confirmation to a tradition long current in the neighbourhood, but based upon no established history, that an ancient cemetery existed not far from the place. The legend, at all events, sufficed to divest these discoveries of more than a passing interest, and the remains were assumed to have tenanted some outlying grave, when a necessity of obtaining gravel induced the breaking up of a kind of lawn close beside the farm-house. Then, for the first time, it became apparent that a vast mass of human remains lay buried beneath a coverlid of gravelly soil, so shallow that the bones frequently pierced upward within little more than a foot of the surface.

Bones, bones, and ever bones! A trench was sunk in advance of the original cutting,

and there were still bones. It became evident that an army of skeletons, disposed in ranks, usually, though not invariably, pointing east and west, extended far in front and on either hand. All were perfect; all, with one exception (of those examined), males; all laid, as with military method and regularity, decently in order, on their backs, and with hands placed together on the body, or crossed upon the breast. The great majority seemed to have perished in the prime of strength and manhood. Some of them must have been creatures of noble mould. One of the skeletons was that of a man exceeding seven feet in stature. The skull of this gigantic warrior—if such he were—exhibited a fearful injury (not caused in the process of exhumation), such as might have been inflicted by the blow of a heavy weapon—a mace or battle-axe, dealt from horse-height.

There is a mystery overhanging these remains that rarely attaches to similar discoveries. In every instance in which interments on a scale approaching this, have been revealed, the finger of history, or at least, of local tradition, has pointed to some incident capable of elucidating the matter. Or, if that has been wanting, the remains themselves have supplied the needful testimony. The natural structure of the skulls, atoms of dress and arms, coin, working implements, &c., have furnished the archæologist with data for the historian. In this case, all such evidence is wholly wanting. Of the nine or ten skulls conveyed to Oxford to be examined by Professor Rolleston, none were indicative of an especial race. Not a shred, not an atom of garments, arms, or any such thing, afforded a clue to the probable epoch of the burial. That the place was an ordinary cemetery, was negatived both by the uniformity of sex of the buried, and the shallowness of the trenches in which they were laid. The same objections, with the additional one of great care and deliberation having been manifestly used in the interment, prohibit the supposition that it was a plague-pit. On the other hand, these three circumstances are all alike characteristic of a military burial, the careful arrangement in shallow trenches indicating the combined order and haste with which such operations are often conducted. Stern necessity compels the speedy covering of the mangled and decomposing dead. There is no time to dig deep. In many a battlefield, down to Magenta and Solferino, where it was the writer's hap to witness the burial of many thousand slain, the coverlet of earth accorded to the warriors had not been thicker than this of Milcote.

And the date? It was suggested that the Chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon might cast some light upon this question; but, of the battles that hurtle through his pages, not one can be assigned to this precise locality, nor does he refer, in terms, to any Warwickshire battle, save that at Secandane (Seckington), in seven hundred and fifty-two, in which King Ethelbald and a large following were slain.

There is no lack of more recent battle-fields

in the neighbourhood. Tewkesbury, the last conflict of the rival Roses, was fought but twelve miles from Milcote; still it is to the last degree unlikely that the slain, though identical in number with those buried here, should have been transported to this spot. Edge-hill lies still nearer; but some record of such an interment, so comparatively recent, must, beyond question, have been preserved.

Unless some new discovery should suggest a different solution of the mystery, it may be fairly presumed that this mute graveyard owes its origin to the battle, or rather the massacre, of Evesham, in which the turbulent spirit of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, closed its earthly career. This occurred on the fourth of August, twelve hundred and seventy-one. The earl, approaching from the Welsh marches, expected to form a junction with his son, advancing from London; and, with that view, crossed the Severn, and encamped at Evesham. From thence he witnessed with exultation the approach of a splendid host, its own well-known banners floating in the van. While gazing on the array, news arrived that a powerful enemy threatened his flank, while the force in front, displaying the royal banners in place of those they had captured, themselves conveyed the first intelligence to the dismayed baron that his son had been surprised, defeated, and slain. Short time was allowed for dispositions of defence. The foe came steadily on. "I have taught these men the art of war," muttered the earl, bitterly; adding, as he saw his Welsh levies already preparing to melt away, "the Lord have mercy on our souls! Our bodies are Prince Edward's!"

Old King Henry, a prisoner—placed by Leicester in the front of the battle—was wounded, but saved; while the earl, his son, Hugh le Despencer, a hundred and sixty knights, and many gentlemen, perished on the field. As the raw Welsh levies, dismayed at the terrible disparity of force, broke and fled almost before the battle joined, nothing is more likely than that the headlong flight continued until the Stour and Avon, one on either hand, uniting at Milcote, caught them as in a snare. These streams, though narrow, were unfordable. There was no return; for the fight was over, and the victors already on their track. In that confined plateau, we do not doubt, the fugitives were massacred, stripped, and buried.

Strong desires had been expressed by scientific men that a further investigation should be made—while others, indifferent to the claims of history and archæology, were disposed to regard such a course as an unwarrantable desecration of the spot. Severe frost put an end to any hesitation that good Mr. Adkins might have felt in deciding this point of controversy; but the difficulty of satisfying *everybody* was curiously exemplified by the receipt of two letters, by the same post, addressed to the proprietor by two gentlemen in Scotland. Number One deeply regretted the extent to which the exhumations had been already carried, condemned the idle

curiosity that would disturb a warrior's rest for the sake of ascertaining whether he were Dane, Briton, Pict, or Saxon—whether he belonged to this century or to that—and recommended that subscriptions should be forthwith entered into, for the purpose of surrounding the whole burial-place with a palisade. But Number One did not enclose anything in furtherance of that scheme. Number Two warmly congratulated Mr. Adkins on being the proprietor of a spot to which so much historical interest must henceforth attach, urged the promotion of that interest by further excavations, and begged the good farmer, if he had a few skeletons yet unappropriated, to send him some half-dozen at any cost, and without delay.

THE BIRD OF PARADISE.

Oh, wondrous bird of regions bright,
With such a gorgeous plumage dight,
Hast thou no plaintive song to tell
Of that best place where thou didst dwell,
Ere Mother Eve from Eden fell?

Methinks in some delightful bower
Of that bright garden, hour by hour,
Was heard thy spirit-melting strain,
Though now we plead to thee in vain,
Thou wilt not, canst not sing again!

Alas! what wonder is't, that thou,
Poor banished one, art silent now,
Since thou didst pass the golden gate
To share our erring parents' fate,
Companion of the desolate!

Oh, on thy wings my spirit bear,
And through the still enchanted air,
Blue lake, and balmy ocean o'er,
We'll wend our way to that sweet shore
Where thou shalt find thy voice once more.

Ah me, delusive fancies, cease!
Presumptuous, murr'ring spirit, peace!
We ne'er shall reach that blissful strand
Till Eve and all her children stand
Redeemed on their Father-land!

Then once more valley, mount, and grove
Shall ring with strains of grateful love,
And, like an exquisite surprise,
Thy music shall break forth, and rise
Seraphic, to the hallowing skies,
Sweet Bird of Paradise!

TWENTY-FIVE DARK HOURS.

I'm what we calls a ganger, and have so many men under me: when we're making a new line o' rail. I passed best part o' my time in the country; but I have worked on the lines in France and Spain; but what I'm about to tell you happened in London, where we'd sunk a shaft right down, and then was tunnelling forrards and backwards—the shaft being to get rid of your stuff, and sometimes for a steam-engine to be pumping up the water. It's rather dangerous work, and a many men gets hurt; but then a great deal of it's through carelessness, for lots of our fellows

seems as though the whole o' their brains is in their backs and arms, where they're precious strong, and nowhere else; but I'd got so used to it, that in cutting or tunnel it was all the same to me, and now I was busy supering the men digging, and sometimes bricklaying a bit, so that I thought werry little about danger when I'd seen as all the shores and props was well in their places.

It was just at the end o' the dinner-hour one day, and I was gone down the shaft to have a good look round before work begun again, and I'd got my right-hand man, Sam Carberry, with me. It was a new shaft, about thirty foot deep, with ladders to go down, and a windlass and baskets for bringing up stuff and letting down bricks and mortar.

We hadn't tunnelled more than p'raps some ten or a dozen foot each way, so as you may suppose it was werry fresh—green, as we calls it; and I wasn't quite satisfied about the shoring up, and so on, for you know fellows do get so precious careless when once they've got used to danger; and as for some of our big navvies, why they're jest like a set o' babies, and for everything else but their regular work, they're quite as helpless. Tell 'em to fill a lorry, or skid a wheel, or wheel a barrer, they'll do it like smoke; but as to taking care o' themselves—but there, I needn't say no more about that—just look at the great, good-tempered, lolloping fellows! A man can't have it all ways; and if he's got it all in bone and muscle, why 'tain't to be expected as he's going to have all the brains too.

"That's giving a bit there, Sam," I says, a-pointing to one part o' the shaft where the earth was a-bulging and looked loose. "That ain't safe. There'll be a barrer full o' stuff a-top o' somebody's head afore the afternoon's over. That's the rain—that is. Take your melle and knock out that lower shore, and we'll put it a couple o' foot higher up. Mind how you does it!" Sam nods his head, for he was a chap as never spoke if he could help it, and then he gets up, while I takes a look or two at the brickwork, so as not to be done by the men, nor yet dropped on by the foreman. Then I hears Sam banging away at the bit o' scaffold-pole, and directly after it comes down with a hollow sound; and then there was a rattling o' loose gravelly earth as I peeps out, and then feels as though my heart was in my mouth, for I shouts out: "That's the wrong one!" But in an instant Sam dropped to the bottom, and as he did so, it seemed as though some one drew a curtain over the hole, and then I felt a tremendous blow on the chest, and was driven backwards and dashed up against the wood scaffolding in the tunnel, and I suppose I was stunned, for I knew nothing more for a bit. Then it seemed as though I was being called, and I sorter woke up; but everything was dark as pitch and silent as death, and, feeling heavy and misty and stupid, I shut my eyes again, and felt as if going to sleep, for there didn't seem to be anything the matter to me. It was as though some-

thing had shut up thought and sense in the dark, and not a wink of light could get in. But there I was in a sort of dreamy comfortable state, and lay there perfectly still, till a groaning noise roused me, when thought came back with a blinding flash, and so sharp was that flash that my brain seemed scorched, for I knew that I was buried alive.

For a few minutes I stood where I first rose up in a half-stooping position, with my head and shoulders touching the poles and boards above me; but a fresh groan made me begin to feel about in the darkness, and try to find out where I was, and how much room I had to move in. But that was soon done, for at the bottom there was about a yard space, and as far up as I could reach it seemed a couple of yards, while the other way there was the width of the tunnel. I dared not move much, though, for the earth and broken brickwork kept rolling and crumbling in, so that every moment the space grew less, and a cold sweat came out all over my face, as I thought that I should soon be crushed and covered completely up. Just then, however, another groan sounded close by me, and for the first time I remembered Sam Carberry, and began feeling about in the direction from whence the sound came.

Bricks, bits o' stone, crumbling gravel, the uprights and cross-pieces and bits of board all in splinters, and snapped in two and three pieces, with their ragged ends sticking out of the gravel. But I could feel nothing of Sam, and I sat down at last, panting as though I had been running, and there was the big drops a-rolling off me, while I drew every breath that heavy that I grew wild with horror and fear; for it seemed as though I shouldn't be able to breathe much longer, and then I must be stifled. It was awful, the thoughts of all that; and had such an effect on me, that I dashed about like a bird in a cage—now here, now there—in mad efforts and struggles to get out. I cried, "Help, help!" and swore and tore about, jumping up and plunging my hands into the earth; till at last, panting, and bleeding, and helpless, I lay upon the gravel crying like a child.

Ah! That did me good, and seemed to clear my thoughts, and make me mad with myself to think I had been wasting my strength so for nothing, when perhaps I might have been doing something towards making my escape; and while I was thinking like this, all at once I started, for there was a groan again close to my head; then, after feeling about a bit, I got my hand upon a bit of broken board, when I felt a groan again, and then, after searching about, found that underneath the board was a face which, by scratching away the earth, I could touch, and feel to be warm.

The first thing I did was to start up and strike my head violently against a cross-piece, so that I was half stunned; and then I began to feel about for a shovel till I got hold of a handle, and found that the rest was so tightly bedded in the soil, that I must have been a good hour grubbing it out with my fingers. But I

kept leaving off to go and speak to the face, which I knew must be that of Sam Carberry; and though, poor fellow, it did him no good, he being quite insensible, yet it did me good, for there was company—I was not alone—and after leaving off that way now and then, I worked again like a good 'un till the shovel was at liberty; for while I was hard at work, I had no time to think about anything else.

And now, though I could feel that poor Sam was breathing, he didn't groan; and I began with the shovel to try and set his face more at liberty; but at the first trial I threw down the tool with a horrible cry, as the loose gravel came rattling down, and in another minute the poor fellow's face would have been completely covered, if I had not thrust myself against the earth and kept it back.

If I could only have kept from thinking, I would not have cared; but now that I was forced to keep still and hold up the earth, the thoughts would keep coming thick and fast, and mixed up with them all were coffins—black cloth coffins with white nails; black coffins with black nails; elm coffins; workhouse shells; and inside every one of 'em I could see myself lying stiff and cold. There was one light-grained elm, which looked sometimes quite like a little speck right off in the distance, and then came gradually closer, and closer, and closer, till it seemed as though the next moment it would crush me, or drive me into the earth where I was crouching; then it would gradually go back further and further, till it was quite a speck again. Then there were processions o' people in black, constantly crowding by.

Now and then there was a noise of a stone falling or a little bit of rolling earth, else all was as still and silent as if there wasn't such a thing as hearing. It was so still that the quietness was horrible, and I began to talk out loud for the sake of having something to hear; and then I listened again, hoping to hear the sounds of pick and spade, for I knew they would be trying to dig us out, alive or dead.

"That'll be it," I says out aloud; "they'll dig, and dig, and dig, till they gets to us; but then they've got all the stuff to get up the shaft, and shore up again as they goes, and I shall be gone long before they gets to me!"

Then the horror of death came again, and I leaped up and beat myself about till I was drenched with blood and sweat, and then I lay still again, with my heart throbbing and beating, and, try what I would, I couldn't get enough breath. I tried to reach the face of my poor mate, and I found it still warm, and that the earth had not settled over it. It was company to be able to touch it so long as he was alive; but I thought about what must come, and then shivered as I felt that I should scrape the loose gravel over it, and creep to the far end of the narrow hole. And now I began, for the first time, to think about home, and my two girls, and their mother; and there was no comfort there, for I began to wonder what was to become of them when I was gone. Quietly as

could be, I calculated what my funeral would cost the Odd Fellows, and then about the allowance there'd be for my people out o' the Widow and Orphan's Fund, and then I thought how things might have been worse than they was. At last of all, I feels quiet and patient like, and, for the first time since I'd been buried, I was down on my knees with my face in my hands.

I don't know how long I stopped like that, when all at once I fancied I heard a voice speaking, and I started up; but it sounded no more, and as I sat listening I could see again all sorts of things coming and going. Now it was coffins; now strange-looking beasts and things without any particular shape; and as they moved, and coiled, and rolled forward, I kept feeling as though they must touch me; but no, they glided off again, and at last, to keep from thinking, I stripped off coat and waistcoat, and, groping about till I got hold of the shovel, I cried out, "God help me!" and began to try and dig a way out.

"Every man for himself," I half roared, and the curious, stifled sound of my voice frightened me; but I worked on till I had thrown back a few spadefuls, when I found that I had put it off too long, and that I could do nothing but sink down, panting for air. I couldn't keep off the idea that something was pressing down upon me and trying to force out my breath; at last this idea got to be so strong that I kept thrusting out my hands and trying to push the something away. I don't know how time went, but at last I was lying, worn out and helpless, upon the ground, feebly trying to grub or burrow a way out with my fingers.

All at once I remembered poor Sam, and, after a good deal of groping about, I found the board again, and laid my hand upon his face, but only to snatch it away with a chill running through me, for it was as cold as ice. Then I tried to touch his breast, but soon gave up; for, with the exception of his face, he was completely bedded in the earth, while the board had only saved him at the first moment from instantaneous death.

I crept as far off as I could; for now it seemed that death was very very near me, and that my own time must be pretty well run out.

I won't tell you how weak I was again, and how all my past actions came trooping past me. There they all were, from boyhood till the present; and I couldn't help groaning as I saw how precious little good there was in them—just here and there a bright spark amongst all the blackness. At last, I began to think it was all over, for a heavy stupid faintness came over me, and I battled against it with all my might; but it was like—to me, there, in that darkness—like a great bird coming nearer and nearer with heavy shadowy wings; and, as I tried to drive it off, it went back, but only to come again, till at last the place seemed to fade away; for after groping round and round the place such a many times, I seemed to see and know every bit of it as well as if I saw it with my eyes, till it faded away, and all seemed to be gone.

Nex' thing as I remembers is a dull "thud-thud-thudding" noise, and it woke me up so that I sat holding my head, which ached as though it would split, and trying to recollect once more where I was; and I s'pose my poor mind must have been a bit touched, for I could make nothing out until I had crawled and felt about a few times over, when once more it all come back with a flash, and I remember thinking how much better it would have been if I had kept half stunned, for now I knew what the noise was, and I could hardly contain the hope, which seemed to drive me almost mad. Would they get to me before I was dead? Could I help them? Would they give up in despair, and leave me?

I lay listening to the "thud-thud-thud," till all at once it stopped, and the stillness that succeeded was so awful that I shrieked out, for I thought they had given up digging. But the dull distant sound roused me again, and once more I lay listening and counting the spadefuls that I knew were being laboriously and slowly thrown out. Now I was crying weakly, now foaming at the mouth, every now and then the noise could not be heard; at last, when I could just faintly hear the sound of voices and tried to shout in reply, I found I couldn't do more than whisper.

All at once the earth came caving in again, and I was half buried. Weak as I was, it took me long enough to get free, and to crawl up and sit behind an upright post or two, and it was well I did, for no sooner was I there than the gravel caved in again, and I heard a shout; saw a flash of light; and then was jammed close into the corner, and must have been suffocated but for the wood framing about me, which kept the earth off. But as I set wedged in, I could hear the sound of the shovels and picks, and I knew how men would toil to get out a brother-workman. And now, feeling quite helpless and resigned, I tried my best to pray for my life, or, if not, for mercy for what I had done wrong.

"Ain't nobody here?" said a voice, as it seemed to me in the dark, and I could not speak to cry for help.

"Must be," said another voice. "Poor chap's under them planks!" And then come that sound of shovels again, and then a loud hurrying, and I felt hands about me, and that I was being carried, and something trickled into my mouth. Then voices were buzzing about me more and more, and I began to feel able to breathe, and I heard some one say: "He's coming to;" and then one spoke, and then another spoke, and I knew I was being taken up the shaft; but all was as it were in a dream, till I heard a loud scream, and felt two arms round me, and knowing that now I was saved indeed, I tried to say—"Thank God!" but could only think it.

After a bit I managed to speak, but I suppose I said all sorts of foolish unconnected things, till I asked the time, when the voice that re-

vived me so, whispered in my ear that it was nearly three.

"And how long was I there?" I got out at last.

"Twenty-five hours!"

HOME, SWEET HOME.

PYE-STREET, Westminster, is five minutes' walk from the House of Commons. Passing the monument to the brave Westminster lads who have fallen in defence of their country, and leaving on your left the dread establishment where our youth are passed or plucked by the Civil Service Commissioners, you turn down a narrow thoroughfare opposite a great hotel—the pleasant peculiarity of which hotel is that pretty girls are always to be seen at its coffee-room windows—and promptly lose yourself in a labyrinth of foul and unsavoury streets. Towering above the miserable houses in front and on each side of you are stately edifices rapidly approaching completion; and while the constant click of mallet and chisel testify to the continual extension of building, they serve to increase your bewilderment and lessen your chances of finding the place you seek. This, if you attempt exploration without a guide. To-day, however, we are accompanied by a tall member of the A division, who knows Pye-street and its approaches well, and who tersely says of the former, "A pretty sort o' drum for you to visit, gentlemen."

It is now six o'clock in the evening of Monday the 13th of March, and the Right Honourable the Chancellor of the Exchequer has been eloquently advocating for more than an hour the political claims of the working man. The crowd we have just left outside Westminster Hall is composed of people who have failed in obtaining seats in the strangers' gallery; the news-boys are already shouting "Second edition, Mr. Gladstone on Reform;" the mysterious wires are spreading north, east, west, and south, arguments in favour of extending the franchise; and we all read next day that the right honourable gentleman resumed his seat at ten minutes past seven, after declaring, amid the loud cheers of an excited House, that "more than your gold and your silver, more than your fleets and your armies, is the attachment of the people to throne and laws, at once the strength, the glory, and the safety of the land."

At the moment of this peroration being uttered, we are in a back-yard in Pye-street, testing for ourselves the surroundings of those whose loyal attachment is so highly prized and so properly vaunted. We have spent the time during which the working man's political rights have been gracefully dwelt upon, in seeing how far his social claims are practically considered, what his home is like, what the air he breathes, what the water he drinks. The following description is, for obvious reasons, made general, but its details are minutely accurate, and one or other of them apply to the numerous poor homes we visited that bright evening. This

back-yard, then, is one of many, and the squalid tenements of Pye-street are duplicated all over London. In St. Dragon's in the South, in Clerkenwell, in Bethnal-green, in the yards and courts off Drury-lane, may be found the sights we shudder at to-day. Indeed, so minutely does the present experience coincide with that previously acquired, that it is difficult to realise the locality we are in as one we have not explored previously.* Take this yard, for example. Unpaved, with its black slimy soil sticking up between the round and broken bits of stone which form its flooring; a panless closet in one corner, from which a pestilential stench proceeds; an open dust-heap in another; between these, the water-butt for seven families. Of course this butt is uncovered; of course the wood of which it is composed is in an advanced stage of decay; of course the exhalations from the soil-bestrewn yard, from filthy closet, and from dust-heap, are attracted by the water, and take form and shape in that rainbow-hued scum we see glistening on its surface. Peering into the butt, we see, at its bottom, broken tobacco-pipes, cabbage-stalks, bits of broken tile and pottery-ware, and an old shoe. On tapping its side with a walking-cane, the rotten wood breaks, and with long strings of green slime like seaweed, comes off at the slightest touch. "No, it is never cleaned out, for to tell yer the truth, gentlemen, my old man began to clean it one day, and blessed if he didn't scrape a hole right out of it, where yer see the rag a-pluggin' of it now; and since then we've let it alone, for the water don't taste so very bad, and it ain't much of it we drinks!" The speaker is a fat coarse slattern, the wife of a bricklayer's labourer, not yet returned from work, who did the honours of her wretched room and plague-creating yard with a certain unction, as if impressed with the novelty of conversing with a member of the metropolitan force on amicable terms.

"Dust-heap never removed! Lord bless yer, no; they don't never remove it without we gives them somethin' for theirselves. Parish pays the dustmen! Yes, sir, and so I've heard myself; but that there heap before you is as bad as it is to-day, because me and a neighbour fell out as to whose turn it was to stand the dustman a drop o' beer!"

Decomposed fish-heads, decayed vegetable matter, cinders—what in another sphere would be called kitchen refuse—and the scourings of the pig-tub, made up the foul mass before us. Here and there, where the rays of the setting sun fell upon it—for the evening was bright and clear, as those in waiting outside Westminster Hall will remember—it sent a sluggish putrescent vapour up, to mingle with the already vitiated air, and insidiously force its way through broken panes, into rooms where whole families lay stewing. Might we go up-stairs? Certainly we might, if we wouldn't mind treading softly over the two broken ones, and keeping to the left, where we saw the hole. A few moments' stumbling and we are in the

* See EVERY MAN'S POISON, vol. xiv., p. 372.

first-floor back-room. Phew! Sweet home! Why, the smell sends us precipitately back, with camphor-ball to nose, before we have advanced three paces. The course of my duty has led me to become acquainted with more foul smells than most of my friends have encountered, and I declare the one we are inhaling to have an inkling of them all. There is the horrible entomological aroma prevalent in the Field-lane Refuge, when its occupants have been in bed an hour or so; the wretched tramp-smell of an overcrowded casual ward; the stench of an ill-smelling drain; the flavour of boiled greens, of onions, of strong cheese, of bad meat; and mingling with, and overriding all, is the dreadful odour of a sick-room, in which nurses are careless and patients uncleanly. There is no mistaking any one of these, and no exaggerating their conjunctive effect. Unconsciously at the time, but with a morbid exactitude which enables me to shudderingly recal them now, I mentally tick off each noisome flavour before I reach the door, and then, hanging out of the broken sashless window on the staircase, inhale the breezes from the closet, dust-heap, and water-butt in the yard, until, on the principle of one poison neutralising another, the sickening sense of nausea is subdued, and I am able to look in-doors again.

The filthy bedding in the corner on which that drunken Irishman is stertorously sleeping himself sober, together with the dirty flooring and neglected walls, account for the obvious prevalence of nameless insects; while the food being cooked in one part of the room and devoured in another; the poor sickly woman with her baby in the second bed; the crying child with the discoloured bandage round its head; the numbers seated within the four narrow walls, at the apparent rate of about three square feet per soul; the corduroy and fustian garments before the fire, and the steaming rags suspended from the lines running across the room, supply the other scents. This is a working man's sweet home. This is his retreat after the labours of the day are over, for the attractions of which it is expected he will decline roaming amid pleasures and (gin) palaces, and in which he fosters that attachment to throne and laws which conduces—let me repeat Mr. Gladstone's florid words—more than gold or silver, more than fleets or armies, to the strength, glory, and safety of the land. It is through no fault of his that he is condemned to live, breathe, and have his being, in an atmosphere and with surroundings which are slowly poisoning his life-blood, and paralysing his stout arm. He need be neither idle, vicious, nor improvident, to come to this. Given, daily labour at a specified part of the metropolis, and you will see that he must live within a reasonable distance of it. Admit the necessity of this, count the number of houses fit for his occupation and suitable to his means; and overcrowding, together with a persistent violation of sanitary laws resulting in disease and death, will be seen to be as natural, as that a tree should bring

forth fruit after its kind. Add to this, that the owner of the house and yard we have visited, can in practice snap his fingers at the sanitary inspection under which it is theoretically put; keep in mind that the competition for house-room is so fierce, that decent labourers are compelled to herd in these miserable dens; that the increase of railways and the spread of improvement are adding to the evil daily, by pulling down small tenements; and then wonder if you can at the spread of epidemics, and the heaviness of the metropolitan death-rate.

Pye-street has been selected for visitation because of its proximity to the Houses of Parliament; and because, as I shall point out, it has also shown itself capable of better things. Let us now turn for a moment to Bit-alley, Clerkenwell. It contains twelve houses, with a total of twenty-nine rooms. Of these, two are occupied by donkeys, and the remaining twenty-seven form the homes of eighty-three human creatures. The average width of this alley is six feet six inches; one room here with a cubic area of one thousand and fifty feet is occupied by six souls, a man, his wife, and four children; and another with a cubic area of seven hundred and seventy feet holds a man, his wife, and two children. The inhabitants of the adjacent Sheepcourt, and Friar's Inn-alley, make up with the eighty-three here, a population of one hundred and ninety-two, who have but two necessary out-houses and one water tank among them, the latter being invariably dry on Sundays. At Narrow-yard, in the same parish, three separate families were crammed into two rooms without water-supply or closets, and were compelled to beg water and make shift as they could, until the wretched places became so dilapidated as to be pulled down under the Dangerous Structures Act. The ground on which they formerly rotted, is now vacant. It has been calculated that three thousand five hundred houses, accommodating twenty thousand working people, have been destroyed by the extension of metropolitan railways alone, during the years preceding 1865; and I learn, on testimony which is indisputable, that one thousand three hundred houses, chiefly belonging to working men, are now under sentence from the same cause.

On leaving the wretched Pye-street house we had examined, we carefully picked our way among shoals of sickly children, who crowded every door-step and pursued the genial sports of battledore, tip-cat, and hopscotch, in the roadway; and glancing opposite, saw two fine piles of buildings, which, standing side by side, are monuments to the practical benevolence of those erecting them. Into these we did not go. The writer knows their neat cleanliness, their comforts, and their luxuries, well; for they resemble, in all essential particulars, the other model dwellings he has seen, are built by the same agency, and are subject to the same laws. The contrast between their trim uniformity and the wretched squalor of the side of the street we have left, make them fairly represent the opposite extremes of comfort and misery. But Pye-

street is exceptionally fortunate in the number of people who are properly housed within it.

For twenty-two years it has been sought to force upon capitalists and the charitable, the crying need of working people for better homes. Much has been done, much has been written and spoken, and it has been demonstrated by Mr. Alderman Waterlow, that investments of this character, besides hugely benefiting the tenant, may be made as remunerative as many other descriptions of house property. The following figures show what had been done, up to the end of 1865, by the model cottages and buildings which receive, and merit high praise :

Metropolitan Association finds homes for ...	2500
Society for Improving Condition of Working Classes, for.....	1364
Miss Coutts's Model Houses, for.....	706
Mr. Gibbs, for	670
The Peabody Buildings, for.....	874
City Corporation, for	700
Alderman Waterlow, for	600
Industrial Dwellings Company, for.....	1384
Total housed	8798

That is, rather more than a third of the number dispossessed by railways alone, during the last few years, have been absorbed into well-built well-appointed dwellings, during twenty years of earnest agitation and benevolent effort ; while thousands upon thousands of their less fortunate brethren are doomed to such wretchedness as we have seen. To prolong their valuable lives, to save society from what is at once a great sin and a great danger, the sanction of parliament is sought to a scheme for improving the homes of the working classes on a more comprehensive scale than private enterprise or private philanthropy can attempt. If Mr. McCullagh Torrens's proposals become law, the remedy for existing evils will be a simple one. When the death-rate of a district exceeds three per cent on its population it will be in the power of any twenty ratepayers to call for and obtain the services of one of the Crown inspectors already appointed under the Local Government Act. This gentleman will be required to examine and report upon the condition of the houses and streets in which these deaths have occurred, to state the number of persons or families living and sleeping in them, and to what extent they are unfit for human habitation. Further, he is to say how far it may be needful for such buildings to be removed with a view to the erection of "permanent and healthful houses, suitable for the accommodation of persons subsisting by daily or weekly wages." The definition of "healthful houses" is, adequate provision for sewerage, lighting, ventilation, and water supply, and a space of not less than three hundred and fifty cubic feet of air for each occupant, whether infant or adult.

After some necessary formalities, the local authorities will be compelled to erect proper dwellings in the place of those condemned, and to borrow the necessary funds from the Public Works Loan Commissioners. Interest at the rate of

three and a half per cent is to be charged, and the entire sum of capital and interest is to be repaid in yearly instalments of equal amounts, in a period not exceeding thirty years. The essence of Mr. Torrens's scheme is, that it is compulsory. The fever-nests of which Dr. Jeafferson writes, and which have been described in these pages, would be at once rooted out ; for, neither vested interests, nor the purblind obstinacy of parish magnates, would be allowed to interfere with the common good. The streets, courts, and alleys from which the fever taint never departs, and which family after family only occupy to die, would be promptly condemned and destroyed. The horrible state of things we saw in Pye-street would be impossible, and the poor man's sweet home would be a reality instead of a bitter sham. Happily, it has been shown that this result can be arrived at without pecuniary loss ; for, as the late Prince Consort shrewdly remarked, "Unless we can get seven or eight per cent, we shall not succeed in inducing builders to invest their capital in such houses," and a low rate of interest would be equally unpalatable to corporate bodies. But that double the amount to be paid for the loan can be easily obtained under proper management, Mr. Alderman Waterlow has shown ; and an experiment tried by the corporation of the City of London is an important testimony in the same direction. In 1851, the Court of Common Council decided that the "Finsbury Estate Surplus Fund," amounting in round numbers to forty thousand five hundred pounds, should be expended in providing improved lodging-houses for the labouring poor. After some years' delay a piece of freehold land was purchased in the Farringdon-road for sixteen thousand pounds, upon which a stately pile of buildings has been erected at a further cost of thirty-six thousand pounds. The average cost per room here amounted to sixty pounds, or twenty pounds more than similar rooms have been built for elsewhere ; for, as the corporation only aimed at a dividend of five per cent, a greater sum was spent in external splendour than at Langbourn-buildings, where rooms of equal internal comfort were erected for forty pounds, or at Cromwell-buildings, where they cost forty-four pounds ; and this concession to architectural display, without adding to the real comfort of the tenants, makes the difference between a return of five per cent, and a return of seven or eight per cent on the capital laid out.

Of the ownership and management of the dwellings to be built under Mr. Torrens's act, if it becomes law, the local officers, the income and expenditure, the auditing of accounts, and the power of making by-laws for letting and occupation, it is unnecessary to speak here. Ample provision for all these requisites is made in the bill now before the House, but it is sufficient for our present purpose to record the fact that a manful attempt is being made to cope with a great national sin, and an urgent national danger. The labouring population of large towns is decimated, year by year, by diseases

which might be prevented by the commonest precautions; and the public sanction is now asked to a scheme which will not merely preserve the lives of useful workers, but will also avert the peril of contagion from every reader of this page. The details of this proposal are carefully considered, its principle is sound, and it is for the country to say whether selfish or pedantic considerations are to weigh against the substantial practical benefits it would confer. By making Death the witness upon whose grisly testimony habitations are to be condemned, we shall save an infinity of circumlocution, evasion, and contradiction. By giving to independent ratepayers the power of forcing the official machinery into action, we shall triumph over the obstructiveness, stupidity, and selfishness, of vestries and local boards. By empowering the government to advance the necessary funds for rebuilding, at a moderate rate of interest, we shall accord to poverty-stricken neighbourhoods means whereby they can effectually help themselves; and by making the act compulsory, we shall ensure its merciful and just provisions being carried out. It is clear that mere benevolence, even when practised, is not strong enough to cope with the difficulties besetting a comprehensive measure of reform; and many of its proposals, notably that of creating large colonies of poverty, to which the workman is to be carted off by railway every night, are manifestly unsound. The labourer earning from sixteen to forty shillings a week should have the same facilities given him for investing his income in a reputable and decent home, as the labourer whose work is remunerated more highly. If the former be willing and able to pay for comfort and cleanliness, let comfort and cleanliness be sold him at a fair price, without sense or feeling of obligation either on the part of purchaser or vendor. At present, these are fancy articles, which only an extremely limited number of working men are permitted to buy—the permission being regarded as a sort of prize for virtue—and so, monstrous as it may seem, the bone and sinew of the country are sacrificed year by year because of poisonous homes.

THE QUEEN'S SHILLING.

I MADE the acquaintance of the writer of the following narrative a few weeks after he enlisted. Business had called me to Cannontown, and the recruit rendered me signal service in bringing that business to a satisfactory conclusion. We subsequently spent the afternoon together, my new acquaintance accompanying me to the smoking-room of my hotel, and favouring me with his experience of, and opinions on, a military life. Frankly admitting himself to be "fond of change," he made no secret either of his distaste for the army or his dislike for its restrictions. That a uniform coat should render its wearer ineligible for "the best room" in an inn, that publicans do not pay the same respect to private soldiers as to private gentlemen, that early hours

are compulsory, and that liberty of action is curtailed, seemed to be the social grievances weighing most heavily on my friend. We conversed, however, on many other subjects, and I learned several particulars concerning his career before he "took the shilling," which I have been at the pains to verify. Walking together from the hotel to the Cannontown railway station, I suggested that he should put on paper the facts and incidents he had just told me. He agreed readily, and after impressing upon him that a plain unvarnished statement, without any attempt at fine writing, would be most acceptable, we shook hands on the platform, not, I am pleased to know, without mutual satisfaction at having met. A few days later I received, by book-post, the following narrative, the substantial accuracy of which I am ready to vouch for, and which I now give to the reader in the recruit's own words.

I enlisted, not like some, on the spur of the moment, but after due deliberation. I counted the cost, and found I could hardly lose by doing so, and after I had thought about it a few days, one wet miserable morning (the 18th of January, I believe), in the Free Reading-room at Westminster, I told a friend what I intended to do. My friend, who knew a little about the service, having been in it six years, advised me to go into the regiment he had got discharged from. He grew eloquent about the advantages to be derived from "the service," and I forthwith went. This friend, I must mention, was not entirely so disinterested as it would appear. One would think a man counselling so wisely would be doing it for my good, but he knew that if he could get me enlisted it would be five shillings in his pocket, and as we were both in the last stage of hard-upishness, this seemed a magnificent sum. On our way to Charles-street, Westminster, the rendezvous of recruits and recruiting-sergeants, we met a sergeant of the Royal Buffs, and he said,

"Well, my man, want to join?"

"Yes," I replied, "but I want the sergeant of the 63rd. This companion of mine says that is a good corps to join."

The sergeant said, "Tut, tut, man, 63rd a good regiment! Tell you, there can't be anything better than the Royal Buffs—good officers, good food, good pay, pass up to London every month, and one pound bounty. The friend, not caring, I could see, which I went in, acquiesced in the sergeant's remarks, and we repaired to a public-house and had a pot of "half-and-half," and in a short time the sergeant measured the breadth of my chest, and "took stock" generally. He appeared satisfied, and after saying "You agree to serve the Queen for ten years," slipped a shilling into my hand, and motioned to me to accompany him. I did so, and on arriving at a place in Delahay-street, got into a very large bath full of plenty of the very dirtiest water. I can conscientiously declare no casual wards ever had anything to equal this water. It had no "mutton broth" appearance

—quite black, with a skimming of dirty lather on the top. Having plunged into this, we (there were a few besides me) went into the surgeon's office, there to await examination. I stayed nearly two hours before my turn came. There were, besides me, I should think about thirty all together when I went in, and more were constantly arriving. A man came into the ante-room where we were, and shouted for "the next," and if the individual he wanted was not undressed and all ready, he cursed the man, and then cursed the sergeant who had brought him. At length my turn came. I was not undressed, and this man inquired if I was asleep, and if I expected to be undressed by next summer. I soon replied that I was ready. Through a double rank of sergeants of every regiment in the service, perfectly naked, I went into the doctor's room.

The doctor was sitting at a table writing, and did not look round. The man shouted my name, and I suppose the doctor was noting down my age, calling, height, and so forth. The man during this time was giving him my height, &c. The doctor presently looked up, and told me to hop across the room on the left leg and to come back on the right in the same manner. I also jumped over a chair, drew a long breath while the doctor hearkened at my left breast through a small tube, and the examination was ended. He said nothing when I went out, but by the time I was dressed the ill-tempered man, seeing the sergeant standing, said, "What are you standing there for, Clark? Get out of this; your man's passed!"

I received, on getting out, fourteenpence-halfpenny, being that day's pay. The day I enlisted was on a Wednesday, and we did not join the depot until Saturday. There were about one hundred and fifty recruits at this time at the public-house in Charles-street, all waiting to join their respective regiments. All these slept at this house. The house looks small in front, but they have several large rooms at the back, each of which contains fifteen or twenty beds, and is fitted up to resemble a barrack-room. The recruits were of all classes, all trades, and from every part of England, Ireland, and Scotland. Some of them were only sent that day from places in the north of England, and had never been in London before. None that I conversed with acknowledged that the pure love of being a soldier had actuated them to enlist. It was in every case destitution. I met with the same answer when I questioned those in barracks. Not one in twenty ever enlist because they like it, but because they see nothing but starvation staring them in the face.

The next morning after enlistment I went before the adjutant. I don't know his name, as his signature could not be made out, except by the initiated. The morning after I went before the colonel, and the next morning I was sent to Cannontown. I must not forget going on the Friday afternoon before the magistrate at Westminster Police Court to be sworn in.

The magistrate signed his name, certainly, saying that so and so had sworn "before me," but I never saw him. His clerk did it all. One recruit with me was telling the sergeant who accompanied us to the police-office that he would get on well in the cavalry (the corps he had joined), as he had served in a similar capacity in the late war in America.

Sergeant Blue, of the Dragoon Guards, eyed him with contempt. "America, eh? What sort of animals had they over there?"

The recruit said, "Very good," and then a pause. He added, "Not perhaps so good as yours—the fact was, we had mules."

"Mules! oh crickey, shouldn't I have liked to have seen 'em charge! Why, the dragoons would double them up—ay, like that," said the sergeant, cracking his fingers.

Sergeant Blue was particularly tickled at the idea of mules making "a charge," and roared with laughter.

I got very tired of Charles-street before Saturday morning. Fourteenpence-halfpenny a day was not much—scarcely enough to buy food with. I had only been three days, and how much more wearied must some of the recruits have been who were there three weeks! Some of them actually had been that time, and they complained of it, and justly too. All, however, were in good spirits, and anticipating good things in their regiments with a simplicity I have often laughed at since. Another thing I got tired of was the endless "going before" this person and that. I had not done yet, though. On the Saturday morning we were awoke at seven o'clock, and met our guide, Staff-Sergeant Merry. There were seven of us in all, three for Cannontown, and the remainder for Ireland. We stayed just over London Bridge in a coffee-house for breakfast, and during that time the sergeant had an animated argument with the coffee-house-keeper about the Jamaica affair. Sergeant Merry maintained that Governor Eyre was an angel, and that the Morning Planet was all wrong in supposing that Gordon was murdered.

"I tell you what," continued the sergeant, "there are a lot of people who are never so happy as when crying down the English and applauding everything un-English, and the Morning Planet is their mouthpiece." The coffee-house-keeper as stoutly defended the other side, and praised John Bright, and cursed everybody who disagreed with the honourable member for Birmingham. Sergeant Merry got quite excited, and entered so fully into the argument as to get up from his coffee and nearly approach his antagonist, putting an extra stress upon every word by a loud thump on the table.

The time for starting arrived very quickly, and all the way to the station the sergeant anathematised those who criticised Governor Eyre, and said *he* knew what the blacks were.

A soldier can always travel second-class with a third-class fare, and so we all got comfortably seated on leather. The sergeant, in going down the line, explained the several places. "That's

Campwell—three miles from here; this is Drill-well; and this is Cannontown. I have told a person to come for you."

The three of us got out, and were met by a little lance-corporal, who conducted us to the barracks. On getting into the gate, a big fat woman shouted out, "Hallo, three more 'quids!'" She alluded to our each getting one sovereign as bounty-money, and was, perhaps, expressing the delight she would feel at assisting us to spend it. A lot of men, each looking very dirty, were standing at the entrance to the north door of the barracks with boxes in their hands, two and two together, and they each dropped their boxes and inspected us from head to foot, at the same time making remarks on our personal appearance. These men were on what is called "coal fatigue," which I got a practical knowledge of on the succeeding Saturday. A little way up the passage the corporal stopped at a door (the general orderly-room), and spoke to a soldier-like man as to where we should be put. We were then passed on up another pair of stairs, and saw the colour-sergeant of our company, who again passed us into Sergeant Brownlow's hands, who took us into a room, and announced, in a very high voice, as "Here's another, Slatie;" then, turning to me, he said, "This will be your bed." The person addressed as "Slatie" was busy brushing some belts and smoking at a short pipe. He appeared rather shy, but suddenly, as if recollecting something, said, "Oh! you'll want your belts cleaning, and I'll do them for you—I have done a good many recruits."

I replied that I should be happy to give him the job, if he wanted it.

"Oh yes; it is the custom for old soldiers to clean recruits' belts. When they come out of stores they're very dirty."

A young man was in the room acting as "orderly man," and he appeared very busy. Getting up a form endways, he brushed away and sssssh'd just like an ostler; he also managed to keep a respectable distance from the leg of the form exactly as an ostler would from the hind leg of a horse. The barrack-room contained eight beds; over the beds are innumerable straps, belts, pouches, &c., and higher above a shelf runs around where you can place coats, &c.; just above the bed a knapsack is placed with a top-coat, mess tin, and shako. The whole place—so much leather!—looks like a stable, although, of course, much more comfortable; a table and four forms, scrupulously clean, occupy the centre of the room. Sergeant Brownlow came in after a short time and asked me questions about the recruiting-sergeant. I told him Shane had enlisted me.

"Ah! Shane, he's getting on well—pretty well; but nothing like me. Why, when I was up there during the Crimean war, I used to get half a dozen a day."

Sergeant Brownlow had a habit of singing after speaking, and he concluded with a grand burst from *Trovatore*, "Ah che la morte" it was. He then informed me that he had made

one of the company at the late garrison theatricals, and commenced to give me specimens of his elocution. I did not think them very good, but perhaps that might be ignorance. At least he pronounced *question* "questing," and other slight mistakes of the same kind. Then, as I was hungry and thirsty, I inquired where I might get something to drink, and one of the "mess" showed me the canteen, where I indulged in a pint of beer. The canteen is kept in order by a sergeant and a corporal of the brigade, and has for its president a captain. They sell beer (but no spirits), butter, pomade (an article extensively used), and other small things required by a soldier. Any profit arising from this sale is divided among the whole garrison, and thus every man may be said to get a profit upon what he buys. The receipts are about six hundred and fifty pounds a month. No civilians are allowed to buy anything. The expenditure is much less, but I forget the exact sum. A large taproom is near, with tables and forms, and they thus endeavour to provide against the soldier going into the town and getting into bad company. The canteen supplies excellent porter at three-pence-halfpenny a quart, and everything in like reasonable proportion. It is never opened until eleven o'clock in the forenoon, and is closed at half-past eight in the evening. Beer and tobacco being so very near to the soldier, is, no doubt, a great boon, but, after thinking about it, and having every opportunity of observing the canteens, I think the selling of beer is an evil rather than a favour. The soldier can perform any work he may have to do in the daytime without beer. The supporters would say, "But he will go out and spend what he saves in the evening." This is contrary to my experience, and I well know I should myself have been a little better if that place had been a little further away. At every turning you will hear one saying to the other, "Now Tom, Harry, or Dick, what are you going 'to stand?'" If the canteens were away, "standing" would be done away with. The soldier receives his pay* (five-pence a day) usually about twelve o'clock, and he immediately spends it in a "pot o' fours" and a pennyworth of tobacco. That sum he would have in his pocket, and it cannot be held that he would necessarily spend it in the evening. Dinner came at a quarter to one o'clock, consisting of one pint of soup, half a pound of meat, and plenty of potatoes, boiled with the skins on, and looking very dirty. This, however, to me, was a sumptuous banquet, and I enjoyed it accordingly. The next day, I may mention, was "a bake;" that is, the same amount of meat baked with a quantity of potatoes. It is always a bake one day and a boil the next. I much prefer a boil, however. They were all recruits in the room I was put in, except "Slatie," who was acting corporal, and in charge. A good deal of cutting and carving, and a proportionate amount of swearing, accompanied the dinner, as it always does; some cursing the cook for

* After deductions for necessities.

underdoing the meat, while others said they would like to put the baker into a hot place. I got quite at home during the afternoon, and as I was thinly clad, the acting corporal lent me a pair of trousers and boots.

At four o'clock the tea horn goes, and each man has doled out to him half a pound of bread and one pint of tea—none of your Gray's Inn-road tea here, I can assure you, but really good tea. I must object to the tea coming so close after the dinner; you feel to have no appetite for it. This is the last meal, and you have to remain now until the next morning at eight o'clock, just sixteen hours; however, there is generally a little "rooté" (bread) left, and you can have what the soldiers call a "snack" just before going to bed. After tea, a young man, seeing me standing about, inquired with great kindness if I would like to "see about" a little, at the same time saying he knew what it was when he came down a recruit. I gladly assented, and we went first to the reading-room. The reading-room is a large room with a good fire, and well lighted; it is supplied with some of the daily and local newspapers—the papers treating on military affairs, the Illustrated London News and Illustrated Times, Punch, &c., besides the British Workman, and one or two of that class; no "monthlies" except some old numbers of Temple Bar, Cornhill, and the National Magazine, are taken. Altogether, it is a very nice room, and well frequented, and the payment required for this and the library is only twopence-halfpenny per month. The soldiers smoke and talk in it, and none of the prohibitions seen in other reading-rooms are adopted here. The library contains a goodly number of books, mostly relating to military affairs, and is open every day. It is very strange that no catalogue should have been compiled of the books; every one runs about, creating endless confusion, and selects which book he wants from the shelves and takes it to the sergeant in charge, who notes the title in a book used for that purpose. The "game-room" close by contains three bagatelle-tables, several sets of dominoes, and draughts. Many appear to enjoy themselves here, particularly the little buglers. After having seen all these I went back, and Slatie was preparing to escort a young recruit, who had that day received his bounty, into the town. Slatie had cleaned his belts also, and of course the recruit was expected to "stand." I must confess that Slatie came in rather "tight," and bullied us all, and commanded right and left. A man in his position has unlimited power; that one stripe on his arm gives him perfect authority, and, if his word be not implicitly obeyed, he can have you taken to the guard-room, and probably you will get punished heavily. "The first duty of a soldier is obedience," and this is enforced every day, and every soldier will admit, that were the commands of your superior officers disobeyed, and were discipline in the army to relax, it would, in their own words, "go to the devil."

The Sunday passed tamely enough, as I could

not go out, and was all day long moping about the barrack-room. The "roust," as they call it, goes at half-past six o'clock in the morning, when all are to get out of bed; the room is then swept, the fire lighted, and the forms and tables well scrubbed. At eight, breakfast (same as tea). During breakfast the orderly officer of the day comes round; "attention" is given by him who accompanies him, and he just walks by without stopping, and says, "Any complaints?" The orderly man of the day says, "No complaints, sir." I have never heard any complaints made to an officer about anything, and I really don't see how they could be; he walks too quickly past. One day, a soldier happened to look at the orderly officer when he said, "Any complaints?" The officer said, very severely, "Look to your front, sir!" Very exact that. On the Monday morning I had to go before the doctor of the dépôt for his examination at nine o'clock. A corporal took four, besides me, to the hospital, and, after waiting a long time, we were ushered in to the doctor, a fat, pleasant-looking gentleman, with a marked lisp when he spoke. He attentively examined us all, telling one of our company that he moved like a crab, and affixed his signature to the number. The next morning we went before the colonel commanding the garrison. We stood in the orderly-room amid a crowd of non-commissioned officers, who appeared to have nothing better to do than to salute the officers right and left, who were constantly coming in and going out. The sergeant-major was very conspicuous, giving the word of command to several luckless defaulters who were going before the colonel to receive their share of punishment. "To the right face!" "Quick march!" "Take off yer hat!" were constantly the words in the sergeant-major's mouth as he ushered each of the defaulters into the room. The adjutant, a most gentlemanly man, flitted about here and there, giving directions, and Sergeant Brownlow I quickly saw standing smiling at everything, and looking as if he would like to sing. In a short time after the business on hand had been disposed of, the colonel came into the room, and, addressing Sergeant Brownlow, wanted to know what business he had there. The said sergeant explained that he came to measure the recruits, and said he understood it well, as, added the sergeant, with respectful pride, "I've been on the recruiting service;" so the colonel allowed him to proceed. After being measured, the colonel signed his name, and after going before two doctors, two colonels, and one adjutant, we were pronounced fit for her Majesty's service. The colonel is a strict disciplinarian, but a nice-looking man; he has served with distinction in the Crimea, and got wounded there; he is a Scotchman, and will not tolerate lax movements in the service. That morning I got my clothes, but they needed some slight alterations; they were ready for putting on in the evening, however. I don't think I should have got them so soon, only I bribed the tailor who altered them with a pot of beer, which I just remember I never

paid. No, I had unfortunately "no change" at the time, and I have never been lucky enough to meet him since! As soon as I was dressed I tapped at the colour-sergeant's door and told him I was dressed, and received one pound. What a magnificent sum! He warned me gently to mind getting intoxicated, and after this I signed my name as a receipt. The colour-sergeant is decidedly the nicest-looking man I have yet found—so kind and so agreeable, I think it a real pleasure to obey that man's orders; he is quite a gentleman.

Having got my bounty, Slatie suggested that I should air my clothes, and that he should show me about. We accordingly went out. I shall not forget how tightly around me my clothes fit, and how the stock round my neck cut my chin. I cut the latter article down, though, next day, full half an inch, and have since enjoyed freedom about the neck. The gloves I wore (I have rather small hands) dangled about as if I had a pair of stockings on. You are obliged to have chin-strap down, and gloves on in the streets, or else you stand a chance of being taken before the colonel for not being dressed. I have occasionally, when going out, forgotten to have the leather over the face, but the corporal at the gate immediately reminded me of it, by "Shin-strap down, you!" Cannontown contains a great many public-houses, and while we were sitting in one of these, Slatie, with the greatest confidence, told me how much he was liked in the dépôt, and that not a more honourable man than himself could be found—in fact, he paid everything that he borrowed—everything, and would I be kind enough to lend him, as he had something to pay that evening, the sum of three-and-sixpence? I lent it him, thinking, of course, that such an honourable man as he would be sure to pay his debts, but I am obliged to confess that Slatie has forgotten to pay it, and I believe his memory will be always bad about money affairs.

The next morning I went on parade for the first time. The colour-sergeant examined us to see if we were perfectly clean, and I was pronounced dirty; that is, I had a little speck of dirt on my coat, which would have passed unobserved by nineteen out of twenty persons. The least spot of dirt on a coat or trousers is sufficient to give you two or three days' extra drill, but, as I was a young recruit, I was simply cautioned, and then sent away to the squad which I should be learnt the drill in. A corporal with several medals, who had once been a sergeant, but had got reduced through drunkenness, was our instructor, and learnt us the "stand at ease" first. He was a little short-tempered, but after I had seen him some time, I began to like him after all. I had an awkward way of protruding my stomach out, thinking that was the best way to look the soldier, but a few admonitory smacks with a small stick made me keep it out of sight more.

"Keep that stomach in, and turn the palms of your hands out, Forester," were the constant words. "Now," said the corporal, "at the last

sound of the word 'Ease,' you turn your hands so, and when I give the word 'Two,' you bring them down smartly, the right hand sliding over the back of the left, like this. Look up, man—look up. This ground has been searched many's the time, and I don't think you'll find anything now." Then, after a short pause: "Now look—look at that dashed fool of a man there, actually putting his leg to the front!"

Of course some immediately did look round, when the corporal got on to them.

"Now, Jones, *will* you look to your front, and not be spitting and grinning in the ranks like a baboon? and if you don't shut that mouth, I'll shove this stick down your throat."

And so the corporal went on until we got a little sharper. The third morning after I had got my clothes, I notified my intention to "go sick." I had, from wearing a bad pair of boots, got a sore on my large toe, and this pained me more than I could bear. I therefore determined to be off drill until I got better and could walk well. The hospital is situated in an enclosed piece of ground opposite the north side of the barracks. We waited, as usual, a long time for the doctor, and was at last set down to go into the hospital by the fat doctor. I also had a dose of medicine, which made me feel much worse than I was before. A bath, and dressed in the hospital dress, I went upstairs and contemplated myself in the looking-glass. I was dressed in a blue over-coat, a blue waistcoat, and blue trousers, and had on an immense white nightcap, apparently knit in wool. If I was not ill before, I looked so now. I was put upon spoon diet, which means soup and tea, but after a time I got "roast chop" diet, which is much better, consisting of chops for dinner, and a liberal allowance for breakfast and tea. There is a reading-room attached to the hospital, in which you can read a few old numbers of *Cornhill*, &c. Very few people in the hospital (which will accommodate one hundred) were really ill. Ninety per cent were there through their own fault. An old clergyman used to come nearly every day and speak to us in the most kind manner, as if he had never seen us before that very day; he made inquiries what complaint we were labouring under, and when we came in. Each ward contains from eight to ten patients, and has an orderly attached to it. The orderly man is expected to attend to the patients, but the orderly with us seldom did that. He was a most sullen fellow, and nearly always drunk. The doctor comes round every morning and examines each patient. When one is ready to be discharged from the hospital, he signs a paper, and the man forthwith goes out. The second morning I was in, and when I very imperfectly understood the regulations, the sergeant of the hospital came into the ward and asked if any one of us had got a pipe. I immediately said I had, and gave him it. He told me I must expect to be made a prisoner for having one in my possession, and I was taken to the guard-room afterwards; but this I will explain. The patients in my room were all very quiet,

except one, who was an Irishman, and a rabid "Fenian." I used to try to convince this man that Fenianism would collapse shortly, but he argued stoutly that he would live to see the day when the Fenians would bombard London, and be a free and independent people, with The O'Donoghue as their president. The doctor discharged me after being a fortnight in the hospital, and I was taken, when I went out, to the guard-room, "for having, contrary to orders, a pipe in my possession." The guard-room is a small dungeon-like place, with a board for a bed, and into this I was shoved by the non-commissioned officer on guard there. Four persons were there when I got in: three for drunkenness, and the fourth for desertion, and all were singing quite merrily. I had not been here above an hour before I was fetched out by the colour-sergeant of our company, who took me before Captain Moucher. I was conducted into his presence by two sentinels with fixed bayonets. The captain was seated enjoying a pipe, while a companion of his was warming his back before the fire. The captain read the charge, and the colour-sergeant told him I was quite new, and therefore did not understand orders, on which he discharged me. He said, "I shall discharge you, and give an admonishment." But I heard no "admonishment" beyond the words I have written. On coming out, the sentinels were ordered to fix bayonets, and I was free.

That night I was put into another room, exactly similar to the other in appearance, and the next day I performed "orderly man." "Orderly man" has to see that all provisions are on the table. He also washes all dishes, and keeps the room in order. If an officer coming round finds the room dirty, the orderly man is the person who is accounted warrantable. The soldiers in this room were very good, and showed me how to do it. An acting corporal was in charge, a taciturn sort of man, who never opens his lips except when absolutely required to do so. A warm-hearted Welshman, named Evans, has been the man whom I have always looked to for helping me out of my little failings, and well he has done it, too. Another man, named Jones (a Welshman also), occupies a bed. He is a pioneer, and one day refused to obey the acting corporal's commands that he should assist to sweep the room. He was forthwith "lagged," i.e. taken to the guard-room, and the next morning, on being brought before the colonel, was sentenced to two days' cells. The garrison cells are situated near the gymnasium, and the prisoners do shot-drill, stone-breaking, and other work of a like nature. The greatest punishment, however, is having all their hair cut off short. Every prisoner, no matter how short his incarceration, has all his hair clipped as short as possible. This is decidedly the greatest punishment they could inflict upon any one, and much too severe. I have heard of many a one who has got this punishment for slight disobedience desert from the army because they were ashamed to show themselves before their comrades. This man I am writing of takes

the "clipping" so much to heart, that I am sure he only wants the opportunity to make himself "scarce." There is a great amount of power put into each non-commissioned officer's hands, and if he has any grudge against a man he uses it unsparingly. At the same time, obedience *must* be observed.

The next morning I got into another squad, instructed by an Irishman, who spoke so that we could only understand him by dint of great perseverance. He put us through most of the exercises that the former instructor did, and as I was a little advanced, put me into the front rank (right-hand man). The words he used were mostly "Now, this." To one of our company he was unusually severe. "Now, thin, Thompson, will ye's stand straight, and not double yourself up like a lobster? It's as easy to stand straight as cruk'd like that. Attention! Now, Rowe, don't gape about so; do you wish to swallow that officer going by? Look to your front man. When ye's get into duty, see if ye'll be looking about *then*—ye'll get drill till further orders." I stayed with this instructor for several days, and in the interim had a "parade." All the soldiers assembled at ten o'clock and "fell in." The officer commanding each company examined attentively each soldier's arms and accoutrements, and, having done this, said, "Take close order. March!" And then we were wheeled right and left, and about, and marched in slow and quick time round the square, the colonel the while "taking stock." The company I was in (mostly composed of recruits) I thought marched badly, the colour-sergeant shouting, "Now, then, corporal, keep that man in the ranks. Dash it, Brown, why don't you keep quiet? Shove that stomach in. Get into step, *will* you, Smith? Now, quick time—left, right, left, right. Take your time from the big drum. Every time that big drum goes 'bum,' 'bum,' 'bum,' you each put out the left foot." We tried to obey, but it was of no use, and the colonel in a short time dismissed us, evidently disgusted with our efforts to "do" slow time. Drill at nine, drill at eleven, and gymnasium at two o'clock every day but Sunday. There are several swings about the gymnasium, on which the recruits amuse themselves until the orders go for falling in. The drill instructors are always there and call out the names, upon which the "name" says *here*.

The gymnasium contains ropes, ladders, gloves, dumb bells, bars, and everything requisite for strengthening the muscles. We take off our coats and braces, and put on belts. I was first sent to the dumb bells, and did this practice for several days at intervals. One sergeant and two corporals have charge and instruct. These are all very nice men, especially the sergeant. To one who has not been used to such work, it must be painful. My hands are not better now from the blisters going along that ladder made. Then, climbing up poles and ropes, both difficult, and making oneself into a jumper at a circus, putting every limb into

motion. Some of the recruits felt tired, and one of them sat down on a bag of sawdust, but the sergeant quickly got him off with, "Now, shall I send you a pillow? I am afraid you are tired. Some of you fellows do, 'pon my soul! Well, I never—!" and here the sergeant tossed his head as if the remainder of the sentence was too big for expression.

The gymnasium closes at three o'clock, and then we have done drill for the day. You, however, have to keep clean your arms, &c., and probably this will take you some hours in the evening, especially if you have to parade in marching order on the morrow. One day in barracks is so much like another that I can really give no better summing up than an Irish boy in our room, who says, "It be all alike, you know." On Sunday morning the Catholics parade in side-arms at eight o'clock, and go to chapel. The Protestants at ten o'clock go to the barrack church, which is, in reality, a school-room, and used as such on working days. The officers sit at the upper end of the room, the soldiers in the body. The chaplain to the dépôt preaches, but his voice is not very high; indeed, the last Sunday, I, seated at the lower end of the room, just as much knew what he had been preaching about as if he had spoken in Greek. The audience do not, as in other churches, rise one after the other, but all rise at once, making a great noise from their side-arms clattering.

I went out one night with the two Welshmen of our room—one of whom I have mentioned as having cells and being cropped close—and, after walking some distance, we found we should be late. It was just ten minutes after the time when we got in, and we were taken before the sergeant-major, who took our names. The next morning we were brought before the captain of our company by the orderly sergeant. This man was much against us, and stated that we were frequently late, which was an untruth. I explained respectfully to the captain that I was a recruit, and he let me off. To the next man, Evans, he said, "I shall give you three days to barracks."

Evans said, "I hope not, sir. It will stop my pass."

The orderly sergeant insisted that he was always late, and Evans was obliged to appeal to the colour-sergeant whether it was true. The "colour bloke," as he is called, said Evans was very punctual, and so he got off, but the next man (he who had been in cells) was sentenced to three days' barracks. The captain probably thought that his hair being cut short condemned him at once. The orderly sergeant, a regular "griffin," is determined to "lag" Evans, so he says, for proving him a liar, and he only waits the opportunity. Any man accused of a

crime, such as the above one, once in four months, gets deprived of a pass for ten days or longer, just as he may wish, if he be convicted, and this will explain Evans's anxiety about his "pass," as he wanted to go home about the beginning of April. The additional punishment on to the cells made our friend quite mad, and has only made him more disgusted than ever at the "service."

It takes a long time to get used to the army. There is no end of regulations. On Saturday all the men are relieved from drill, but have to go on "coal fatigue," that is, two and two, each carrying a box of coals from the coal-shed to the several barrack-rooms. Each barrack-room is allowed two of these boxes a week, which is quite sufficient. This coal fatigue lasts you until twelve o'clock, when an officer comes round and inspects each soldier's kit, to see that he has everything right. If not, perhaps two days to barracks is your fate. The "two days to barracks" consist in answering your name every half hour, and having an hour's extra drill each evening, under the special charge of Sergeant Brownlow. With these exceptions, there is very little alteration in a soldier's life in barracks.

I must say it, that there are few soldiers here that I could trust; they all will lie, and, to put it mildly, appropriate whatever they can. I doubt not it is the same in all barracks. The English army, so long as it is constituted as it is, will always remain an army of thieves and blackguards—the scum of the land—only kept under control by strict discipline. The soldier's pay is fivepence a day, after paying for provisions—rations they are called—and some people wish to increase it. It would do good to a few, but only increase the drunkenness that already prevails to a fearful extent in the many. There are no really intelligent men here, or any that I take a pleasure in conversing with. The cause why so few educated men are in the army is obvious.

I hope I have described it fully as you wish; but I was afraid of going over the same ground twice, for when you have given one day's experience you have given all.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS'S READINGS.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS will read in London, at St. JAMES'S HALL, on Tuesday Evening, April 10th,

DOCTOR MARIGOLD,

For the first time.

MR. DICKENS will also Read at Liverpool on Wednesday and Friday evenings, April 11th and 13th, and on Saturday morning the 14th, at Manchester on Thursday the 12th, at Glasgow on Tuesday and Thursday evenings the 17th and 19th, and at Edinburgh on Wednesday and Friday evenings the 18th and 20th, and on Saturday afternoon the 21st of April.

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